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Trustees
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WALKS

THROUGH

IRELAND,

IN

THE YEARS 1812, 1814, AND 1817;

DESCRIBED

In a Series of Letters

TO

AN ENGLISH GENTLEMAN.

BY

JOHN BERNARD TROTTER, Esq.

PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE LATE RIGHT HON. C. J. FOX, &c. &c.

"Non hic mihi primus, erga populum Romanum fidei et constantiæ dies:—ex quo à divo Augusto civitate donatus sum amicos inimicosque ex vestris utilitatibus dilegi; neque odio patriæ, (quippe proditores, etiam iis quos antiponunt, invisirunt) verum, quia Romanis, Germanis que idem conducere: et pacem quam bellum probabam." TACITUS.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY SIR RICHARD PHILLIPS AND CO. BRIDE-COURT, BRIDGE-STREET;

AND SOLD BY JOHN CUMMING, DUBLIN.

1819.

25762A

W. Lewis, Printer, Finch-lane, Cornhill.

PREFACE.

The following Letters were commenced, and the pedestrian Tours pursued, under the idea of subsequently forming an historical work on Ireland. This object has been impeded and retarded by unexpected obstacles, and the fruits of considerable observation on that country are now submitted, with great diffidence, to the public, in Letters, partly penned on the spot, and partly extracted from notes. The situation of Ireland is highly interesting. That her misery is great, and that no adequate remedy appears to have been applied, cannot be denied by impartial men. The body of her people can scarcely procure the conveniences and necessaries of life. The country seems retrograde rather than progressive. Improvident legislative provisions have turned dearth to famine;—pestilence has followed. Political injustice keeps alive the fever of the mind.

The Author submits his Letters to the judgment of the Public, hoping that a just consideration of his motives may lead men to excuse the defective nature of his performance.

Biographical Memoirs

OF

JOHN BERNARD TROTTER, ESQ.

BIOGRAPHY, though always an highly interesting branch of literature, is by no means so instructive as it ought to be. It is a display of the conduct and character of an individual in the real occurrences of life; his fortunes are usually found to depend upon his own deserts, and therefore moral truths are inculcated, not by scenes of amusing, though fallacious, fiction, but by facts which all must feel and assent to, because all have had a similar experience. But biographers are friends or associates of the parties, and therefore bring to their work feelings too favourable to the life and writings of the objects they describe. Prepossession thus takes the place of impartiality, and the love of the individual insensibly supersedes the love of truth; failings are palliated, merits are exaggerated, and the pleasure which the biographer feels in thus drawing a favourable portrait of his friend, easily reconciles him to a deception, which, at the same time, flatters his own self-love, by describing the virtues of a congenial object. From this cause of defect, at least, the present sketch is exempt. Whilst an opportunity of intimate knowledge of the subject has given all the requisite means of information, no undue partiality for the

man has biassed the detail; and whatever instruction the chequered scenes of his life may afford, it has not been rendered less by extenuation or concealment.

JOHN BERNARD TROTTER was born in the year 1775, in the county of Down. His family were originally from Scotland, and descended from the Earl of Gowry, whose actions are recorded among the historical events of that country. They left their native land, and took refuge in the moutains of Mourne, in Ireland, where their descendants, at this day, are among the respectable gentry of the country. The father of Mr. Trotter was a clergyman of the established church. He had three sons: Sowthwel, who inherited the paternal estate, and was a member of parliament for Downpatrick; John Bernard, the subject of this sketch; and Ruthven, a major in the army, who was killed at Buenos Ayres.

John Bernard was intended for the church. He was educated in the grammar-school at Downpatrick, under Mr. Wilde; and, in 1790, was entered a pensioner of Trinity College, Dublin, under Dr. Stack. In 1795 he took his degree; and, after attending the usual course of divinity lectures, he took deacon's orders. He did not long continue in the clerical profession. His maternal uncle, Dr. Dixon, had been an early friend to Charles James Fox, by whose interest he was afterwards created Bishop of Down. From him he naturally had great expectations; but, preferment not coming as early as he expected, he became disgusted with a profession to which he was never attached, and left the church for the bar, after having once or twice officiated as a clergyman.

He now entered himself at the Temple, where his first acquaintance with Mr. Fox commenced, which terminated only with the death of that great man. At this period the question of the Union was first agitated in Ire-

land, and he immediately took up his pen in opposition to it. His first public essay, as a writer, was a pamphlet on the subject, which he immediately sent to Mr. Fox. His opinion of it was characteristic. "You "have put your objection to the Union," said he, "on "right grounds; but whether there is a spirit in Ireland "to act up to your principles is another question. I do "not know whether you have ever heard, that it is a "common observation, that Irish orators are generally "too figurative in their language for the English taste; "perhaps I think part of your pamphlet no exception to "this observation; but this is a fault, if it be a fault, "easily mended."—It was a fault, which, unfortunately, he never corrected.

Immediately after the short peace of Amiens, among the English, whose curiosity, or other motives, led to visit France, was Mr. Fox. He wished to consult certain documents necessary for the completion of his historical work; and he wrote to request Mr. Trotter would accompany him, to assist him in transcribing materials. Mr. Trotter was then in Wales, and he immediately joined Mr. Fox at St. Anne's Hill, and set out on this highly interesting tour in the latter end of July, 1802. After passing through Holland and Flanders, the party arrived in Paris, where Mr. Trotter accompanied his patron to examine the most important documents in the archives of the Bureau des Affaires Etrangères. Here, in company with Mr. Fox, Lord St. John, and Mr. Adair, late ambassador to Constantinople, he was sedulously employed in taking extracts from such state-papers as were necessary for the completion of Mr. Fox's history.

Among the characteristic incidents which enlivened Mr. Trotter's interesting account of this tour, detailed in the last years of the Life of Fox, is their introduction to the

first consul, of which he used to mention many circumstances in conversation, which he has not inserted in his work.—When the group of the English who wished to be introduced were formed into a circle, the first consul entered it and passed from one to the other, saying some brief obliging thing to each in succession. When Mr. Trotter was introduced as "Un Hibernois," the chief consul stopped for a moment, as if detained by some sudden recollection—then replying rather to his own thoughts than to the words of the introduction, he muttered "Catholique sans doute," and passed rapidly on.

In three months he voluntarily left Mr. Fox and those fascinating scenes which Paris presented, and returned to Ireland to commence his professional pursuits, and was called to the Irish bar in Michaelmas term, 1802. His health was at this time so delicate, as materially to interfere with his practice. After an interrupted attendance on the courts for a short time, he was compelled to abandon them, and retired to Glasnevin, a pleasant village in the vicinity of Dublin. Here he was known for his active and extensive benevolence on every occasion where it could be exercised; and he has left behind him a character of kindness and good-will, which, after a lapse of sixteen years, is yet recent in the memory of some of the poor people of the neighbourhood. Among the incidents which called forth his sympathy, and engaged his active kindness, was that of a poor young woman who had been the victim of much calumny. She retired with a broken heart to die in obscurity at Finglas, and was attended, with zeal and assiduity, in her last moments, by Mr. Trotter. She imparted to him the strange incidents of an eventful story just before her death; and on those he founded an interesting novel, which he afterwards published.

After three years inactivity, he first appeared in public life in a manner creditable to his spirit and ability. In 1805 was the memorable election for the county of Down, in which Lord Castlereagh was a candidate. This great contest was the touchstone of the feelings of the people at that time, on the subject of the Union, by the acceptance or rejection of Lord Castlereagh. After a long and spirited contest, the secretary of state was obliged to retire defeated; but, with his characteristic good temper, he retired with a conciliating speech. It was on this occasion that Mr. Trotter, then a very young man, made a first and unexpected display of those talents which gave an early promise of future greatness. He started up, when Lord Castlereagh had ended, and replied to his Majesty's minister in a strain of spontaneous and unstudied eloquence that surprised and delighted the auditors. The freeholders crowded round the young orator when he had concluded, with thanks and congratulations. Lord Castlereagh retired without a reply. In the year following his friends were called to political power; as part of the arrangement, the Duke of Bedford was appointed viceroy of Ireland; and Mr. Trotter, to prepare for his approach, established, in Dublin, a newspaper called "The Herald," which was conducted with much spirit and ability, whereby he acquired a high degree of reputation.

He was now a second time sent for by Mr. Fox, who first placed him in a high situation in the foreign-office, and afterwards appointed him his private secretary, which he held at the time of his death. It, perhaps, never fell to the lot of any young man to start into life with more flattering prospects of rank and distinction than now opened on Mr. Trotter; highly connected and popular in his own country, he was called, at a critical period,

without any solicitation on his part, to fill an eminent situation in another. The first offices in the state presented themselves to his distant view at home, and he had immediate prospect of going abroad to a foreign court, in a high diplomatic situation. It should appear that Mr. Fox entertained as well a high opinion of his talents, as the greatest personal esteem and regard: he employed him not only as his political coadjutor in the great concerns in which, as prime-minister of England, he was engaged at that most critical and important period, when the very existence of this country and the other states of Europe seemed to hang on those negociations for peace which Mr. Fox was labouring to effect; but he took him to his most intimate confidence, and he was his friend and inseparable companion in private as in public life.

It is impossible to read the interesting and most affecting narrative detailed of the last days of Mr. Fox, without being struck with this circumstance: When borne down by an oppressive malady, the minister was compelled to retire from the weight of public business, which he was no longer able to support, he took with him his faithful secretary. He was his friend, his confident, his companion, and his nurse. He supported him in his walks, he drew him in his chair when he was no longer able to move, he administered to him his medicines, he sat beside his bed when he could not sleep, and the morning sun often found him diverting the restless vigilance of his friend by reading and conversation. From these attentions Mr. Fox received the greatest consolation, when nearly all his other friends were excluded; and he seemed to die with more tranquillity, from the prospect of breathing his last sigh in Trotter's arms. Surely, then, if the memory of this great political lumi-

nary is held in deserved respect and veneration by his countrymen, the friend who shared with him his ministerial labours, and whom he thought worthy of such confidence, ought not to have been forgotten; if his whole household were provided for by the bounty of the nation, his chief secretary and bosom-friend should not have been overlooked. Yet, so it was; and posterity will hardly believe, that, while the menial who attended at his table was appointed to a situation of £200 per annum in the foreign-office,* the friend, whom he entrusted with the concerns of that important department, was dismissed without the slightest remuneration at his death, and suffered to pine in want and obscurity.†

On the death of Mr. Fox, Trotter returned to Ireland; his spirit was then sound and unbroken, and he asked for no provision which he thought ought to have been offered to him; careless of money, of which he had yet experienced no want, he preferred the independence of a literary life to an office or pension shackled with restrictions. It was his great misfortune to hold himself independent of circumstances, and think himself right in asserting and displaying the same spirit on all occasions. Vain of the distinction of the rank he lately held, the secretary could not condescend to resume the drudgery of a junior barrister in the courts of Dublin; and, indig-

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* Mr. Conway, Mr. Fox's butler.

† A nobleman, high in the confidence of his majesty's government, thus expresses himself, in a letter to Mr. Trotter on this occasion: "I think, have said, and always will repeat, that I think you very "hardly used, in being removed from an office not within the usual "removals or change of government, without some other being given "to you; leaving you, (the friend and secretary of the late foreign se-"cretary of state,) destitute, was unkind and indefensible."

nant at what he supposed the apostacy of some of his party, he was fond of displaying an impotent anger against them. In this spirit he never resumed his situation to the bar, and ostentatiously affected to break off all connection with Mr. Grattan, because he supported the disarming and insurrection bills; and, with the Downshire family, because he thought they wished to make a monopoly of the representative of the county of Down. He seemed to think himself the only representative of consistency and public spirit, and that nothing more was wanting than an opportunity of displaying it to rally the country round him. He took a house at Philipsburgh, near Dublin, and commenced an "*Historical Register*," a periodical work, published by Lewis, in Anglesea-street. About this time his brother, Major Trotter, was killed in the attack in Buenos Ayres, and he devoted some pages of his Register to an eloquent and just eulogium on that gallant officer; he further displayed his affection, and wish to encourage the arts in Ireland, by directing a monument, sculptured by a native artist, to be erected to his memory. This was completed by Ryan of King-street, and was publicly displayed in Dublin for some time, as a monument equally creditable to the artist and his employer; but it was never erected.

Having utterly failed in the speculations of his "Historical Register," he left Philipsburgh, and went to reside at Lark-Hill, in the county of Down, near which was a spa-well, of which Mr. Trotter was advised to drink. Here another circumstance occurred, strongly indicative of that visionary and speculative turn of mind which seemed to unfit him for the purposes of common life. He wanted a friend, and he wished to have one of his own creation. He, therefore, took a poor boy, whom he accidentally met with in the humblest rank of life, and,

undeterred by the failure of a similar project of the celebrated and unfortunate Mr. Day,* he resolved to educate him so as to fit him to be his friend and companion. He, therefore, took him into his family, not as his domestic, but his elevé, and the relations of master and servant were obliterated in those of tutor and pupil. After a suitable education, he appointed him to hold that station in his family which he himself held in that of Mr. Fox, and he made him his confidant and private secretary, a rank which he held in all the melancholy vicissitudes of his future life.

In the year 1808 the question of the veto was much agitated in Dublin, and Mr. Trotter stepped forward in the controversy "to support," as he says, in a pamphlet he published on the occasion, "his own consistency, to "offer to his country a pledge of his independence of "ministers, of his disdain of party, and of his respect for "the venerable fragments which scatter the base of that "temple, once dedicated, in Ireland, to religion and "liberty." In this pamphlet, which he dedicated to the Catholic prelates of Ireland, his opinions are decidedly hostile to his former political friends. He says the veto was a point crudely and inconsiderately brought forward by a *party* in parliament, and that Ireland was by no means bound to their proceedings, or responsible for them. And that the Catholic prelates are resolved to barter to no minister, under any reign whatever, the integrity and independence of their church, for the false grandeur, or vile emolument, which an English minister might propose, or an ambitious monarch might bestow.

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* The eccentric experiment of Mr. Day was made on two females, of which there is a curious account in Seward's Life of Darwin.

The pamphlet was suited to the popular spirit of the time; it was read with avidity, as the unbiassed opinion of a protestant, and contributed, perhaps unfortunately, to increase the obstacles to setting at rest, for ever, an agitating question.

He now applied himself to finish a work of fancy, the foundation of which was laid in the incidents of real life. In 1809 he published his "Stories for Irish Calumniators," drawing all his characters from living models. In Fitzmorice he depicted himself; in Frank, his secretary; in Miss Saxly, a young lady who had died, at Finglas, the victim of calumny; and in the vicar and his family, the Rev. Doctor Dobbyn, and the gifted and benevolent residents of the parsonage-house of that parish, whose amiable features he has sketched with a just and delicate pencil. This work, which was dedicated to Lord Holland, breathes a benevolent and patriotic spirit, and contains much judicious remark and interesting detail. The style, however, is loose and declamatory, the characters strained, and the incidents unnatural; and though popular for some time as a local work, it was soon forgotten. He published also, at this time, a "Letter to Lord Southwell," on the Catholic claims and Irish prelates. This was a subject which now engrossed every one's attention. The letter was read with avidity, as coming from a source respected by the party to whom it was addressed, and acquired for the author much popularity and celebrity.

It was always his opinion, that music had considerable influence on the national character of a people, and that it was no less wise than patriotic to cherish and promote the practice of it. The music of his native country he regarded with enthusiastic admiration, and he was anxious to be instrumental in reviving the race of *Irish*

Bards, which was nearly extinct in the country. In the year 1792 a patriotic society had been established in Belfast for that purpose, and his view was to enlarge a provincial society into one which would embrace the whole kingdom. For this purpose he searched out one of the last of the Irish harpers, whom he found in the person of a blind old man, and taking the bard with his harp into a coach and four horses, he proceeded with his venerable companion to the metropolis. Here he published his proposals for forming a society, and roused the public interest to an intense degree, upon a novel and romantic subject. The Irish melodies were at this time in high and deserved repute; but the Irish harper had never been seen, except by the curious in the College Museum. To display his bard and instrument, therefore, he took a house at Richmond, fitted it up in a style correspondent to his plan; and while he entertained numerous and successive companies with profuse hospitality, his bard sat in his bower, or his hall, and delighted his guests with unheard-of strains of melody. A national society was soon formed, embracing a highly respectable list of noblemen, gentlemen, and professors, and a concert in commemoration of Carolan and the Irish Bards was performed, which will be long remembered, for the enthusiastic ardour which it excited. Intoxicated by the popularity and interest of which he supposed himself now the object, he indulged in a profuse and careless expence, which involved him in difficulties, from which he never extricated himself.

From Richmond he retired, in embarrassment, to the county of Wicklow, and rented a small villa, called Montalta. Here he built a cottage, on the solitary banks of a romantic mountain-stream, and with a mind harmonized to the undertaking, he wrote his "Last Years of

the Life of Charles James Fox." This celebrated work has much to censure and much to praise: the loose and desultory manner, the quantity of irrelevant matter, the wanton offence offered to many of the friends of Mr. Fox, and the weak and unjustifiable attack on the conduct of his physicians, were all subjects of just censure and severe criticism; but the touching details of a distressing malady, the minute traits of a great man at the approach of dissolution, the clear insight of the private habits and turn of mind of a public minister, on whom the eyes of the world were fixed, detailed by a faithful eye-witness, who never for a moment left his bed-side, gave to the work so great an interest, that it was bought with avidity, and in a very short period passed through three editions. Notwithstanding the success of this work, his embarrassments daily increased, and his character, compromised by some unfortunate pecuniary transactions, was daily attacked. Labouring under anxiety and distress, which he was not yet broken in to bear, he at length applied to his majesty's ministers for some situation; he was proffered, through Mr. Canning, a small employment in the revenue, of £150 per annum, which he indignantly rejected.*

His health now declined, and his spirits sunk to a state of morbid depression. A circumstance at this time occurred strongly indicative of the perturbed and desponding state of his mind. He had been some time before engaged with Mr. Fox in a course

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* In a letter to Lord Liverpool he thus expresses himself: "I "think he (Mr. Canning) never knew that the small revenue-place "offered me by the Duke of Richmond was unfit for me to accept. "Mr. Trail was ashamed when he proposed it to me; that which was "degrading I could not take."

of classical reading, and had paid particular attention to Horace, some of whose odes he had translated; there was one, however, which he now dwelt on with persevering fondness, as peculiarly congenial to his present circumstances. It was the seventeenth ode of the first book, addressed to Mæcenas, in which the poet anticipates the death of his patron, and intimates his intentions not to survive him.

> Non ego perfidium
> Dixi sacramentum; ibimus, ibimus
> Ut cunque præcedes, supremum
> Carpere iter comites parati.

This ode he was most anxious to have well translated, and importunately applied to a classical friend, of whose powers of versification he had a high opinion, to do that justice to the subject which he found he could not do himself. His friend complied with his request, and unwittingly fed a despondency, which he subsequently dreaded would ultimately terminate in suicide. Indeed, his conduct justified the apprehension; he frequently left his house, and wandered about the mountains without a wish or intention of returning. When his family, alarmed with his absence, sent in search of him; he was sometimes found at midnight, stretched on the banks of a mountain-stream in the wet grass, soaked with dew and benumbed with cold. At length his creditors seized on his house, and he was driven from his home without knowing where to turn his steps. He retired to Dalkey, near Dublin, and composed, for his immediate subsistence, a novel, called "Margaret of Waldemar." His work, which he completed in a month, was composed under great agitation of mind, and bears the stamp of a wild and morbid imagination. It was rejected by the booksellers as too

extravagant even for the regions of romantic fiction. Disappointed in this expectation and only resource, he became a fugitive without any fixed residence;* and after many wanderings, he proceeded on foot, without any definite object, through the mountains of Wicklow, and finally arrived at Hook Tower, at the extremity of the coast of Wexford.

This sequestered spot is a peninsula running several miles into the sea, and forming the eastern coast of the entrance into the great estuary into which the rivers Suir and Barrow discharge themselves. At its extremity stands a round tower, erected, it is supposed, by the Danes, and found standing when the first English adventurers landed near this spot in 1171. It is now a

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* On one of these occasions he called upon some friends; they lived in a lone country, in a new house and demesne not yet finished, for whom he felt a particular regard. His friends were from home, and he had departed before their return; he left, however, behind him a trace which marked his progress; they found on the chimney-piece an impromptu, written during the few minutes he had stayed. It is here given, as a specimen of that easy and ready versification which he could always command.

To Mr. and Mrs. L——.

When first the infant Muses chose their seat
On earth, and sought with care a lone retreat,
No flowret smil'd, no foliage deck'd the place,
Till poesy display'd enchanting grace;
Whose magic breath soon vivifi'd the scene,
And the dull spot arose in bloom serene—
Thus here the hand of Genius forms around
The varied charms that deck the wondering ground;
And here the Muses haste—they gently press
And hail the spot which all the Virtues bless.

J. B. T.

light-house, marking the entrance of the harbour of Waterford. On this peninsula he became the inmate of a sequestered cabin, unknown and secluded from the world; and hoped to find refuge among the solitary haunts of seals and sea-mews. One day, as he wandered along the coast of this wild region, in attempting to pass a rock, rendered slippery by the spray of the sea, he lost his infirm footing, and fell from the summit, and was taken up severely contused. While labouring under the effects of this accident, and yet scarcely able to walk abroad, early one morning at sun-rise, two men entered the cabin, and asked for the refreshment of a drink of water. Mr. Trotter, who was just risen, with his accustomed good-nature, directed that the poor men, who seemed to be travellers, should be supplied with something better; and while some of his family were preparing to set before them the best his house afforded, the men seized him suddenly and violently by the collar. Surprized by this unexpected attack, at an unseasonable hour, and in a solitary place, he resisted, from an impulse of self-preservation; and the young man, his secretary, coming to his aid, assaulted the men with more zeal than discretion, and they were expelled from the house. It soon appeared that they were bailiffs executing a writ, though they never shewed it, or even declared the purpose for which they assaulted him. They immediately applied to the nearest magistrate, and lodged an exaggerated information of an assault and rescue. The magistrate proceeded to the house with a body of armed servants; and when Mr. Trotter refused to open his door, from an apprehension of an arrest for debt, they brought a file of soldiers from Duncannon-fort, and laid siege to the cabin. The whole country was now alarmed; crowds were collected from all quarters; and while they were

preparing to burst open the door with a sledge, Mr. Trotter came quietly forward and surrendered himself. It appears, by his uncontradicted statement, that he was treated with the most unfeeling brutality by the magistrates, particularly by one of them. He was called a "ruffian," and addressed in the language of wanton and unnecessary insult, and a common flat-backed car and straw were brought to convey him. This is the usual carriage prepared for the commonest felon, and, from the structure of the rude machine, is the most painful and uneasy at any time; but, in bad roads, and to an invalid, labouring under the effects of recent wounds, would be intolerable. He, therefore, declined a mode of conveyance at once ignominious and painful; and having petitioned in vain for a carriage, or even a jaunting-car, he was marched with a delicate female, and the young man, his secretary, on foot, through the country, to Wexford, with military parade, and the way lengthened by an unnecessary circuit of several miles. At length, two gentlemen of the county came forward and interfered. The parties were bailed for the assault, and liberated; but Mr. Trotter was lodged in the Marshalsea of Wexford jail under the arrest for debt. On this occasion, he appealed to the public, through the medium of the press, detailed the brutality with which he was treated, and severely animadverted on the conduct of Messrs. Tottenham and Handcock.

From the jail of Wexford he was removed by Habeas Corpus to the King's-bench prison in Dublin. While confined here, he wrote to a clergyman, with whom he was in habits of intimacy, to request he would come to him, as he had something which pressed upon his mind which he wished to communicate. His friend, who had not seen him since he was in the zenith of opulence and

popularity in Dublin, was shocked at the change. He found him in a naked apartment of that dreary mansion, wrapped in a soiled and tattered night-gown, leaning with his elbow on a table, and his head resting on his hands, pensively contemplating the bust of Fox, which stood on the table before him. This relique he had never parted with, but bore it as one of his penates, or household gods, through all his wanderings. He told the clergyman he was going to be married on that day, and requested him to perform the ceremony. His intended wife was a young woman of respectable connections, who had formed a strong and early attachment for him, and had followed him through all his misfortunes, which she equally shared. Struck with the irreparable injury it would do to his future prospects, his friend ventured to remonstrate on the imprudence of the act; but he cut all remonstrance short. "My mind," said he, "is made up, and I would not have it disturbed; nor would I expect that a clergyman would dissuade me from an act enforced by every motive of justice, morality, and religion." His friend was silent, and his marriage was solemnized in the prison!

While residing in the county of Wexford, he had been engaged in a consideration of the political state of the country. The late parliament was then new, and had just assembled for the first time. The death of Mr. Percival had made some difficulty in forming a new administration, and the intemperance of the Catholics had alarmed and alienated some of their warmest friends. He took an impartial, temperate, and candid view of the state of things, and the difficulties which the government of the Prince-Regent had to contend with. This he published while in the Marshalsea, in a pamphlet, called, "Five Letters," addressed to Baron Sir W. Smith. They were well received, and

shortly passed through two editions. He now wrote to Lord Yarmouth, inclosing a copy of this pamphlet, who replied in a kind and friendly letter, holding out hopes and inducements to go to England, and inclosing him a bill for £200 for his present expences. With this he compromised with his creditors, many of whom declined to receive any part of their debt, and were anxious that he should be liberated without any payment; evincing a liberal feeling, no less honourable to themselves than creditable to him.

It was his wish immediately to avail himself of the invitation to England, but he was detained by a circumstance as unexpected as it was vindictive. His mysterious residence on a solitary peninsula in the county of Wexford, had rendered him an object of alarm and suspicion to the neighbouring gentry, in a country so recently and so dreadfully agitated. He was, moreover, from his political connection, considered what is called in Ireland a *marked man;* and his decided but imprudent opinions on some popular questions, had inflamed rancour against him. An insinuation had been thrown out, that his residence in that part of the country was for the purpose of holding secret meetings, and sowing seditious opinions. When, therefore, he had opposed the bailiffs in the execution of the writ, they availed themselves of his imprudent act, and instead of remuneration for the unworthy manner in which he was treated on that occasion, a merciless and relentless prosecution was commenced against him. He was indicted, therefore, at the assizes of Wexford, and he was compelled to attend the trial. The bailiffs deposed that they were violently assaulted and severely wounded; and an impression was made, that there were guns and ammunition kept in the house for the purpose of resistance to the laws. His own family were

restrained from giving evidence in his favour by being equally included in the indictment. The evidence stood uncontradicted, and the judge charged the jury accordingly. Mr. Trotter now addressed the Court in an eloquent and pathetic speech. He averred, that the bailiffs had shewn no writ, or acted in any way to induce him to believe they had legal authority; that he did not open his door to the magistrates from the conviction that he had a right to protect himself against arrest from bailiffs who had made no legal caption; that he and all his family had ever held the laws of their country in the highest respect; and at the very time when imputations of sedition and outrage were attempted to be affixed to him, he was composing, in retirement and solitude, a defence of his majesty's government, which had been equally well received by the government and the people; that he had received flattering encouragement from the Prince-Regent, who could not be supposed to countenance a character liable to a disloyal imputation; and that prospects now opened on him, which conviction and confinement for the supposed offence with which he was charged would for ever destroy. The Court was moved; the barristers employed against him declared they would rather throw up their brief than be accessary to such a case; and, much to the disappointment of the prosecutors, the expected period of his imprisonment for two years was changed to one fortnight. At the expiration of this term he went to England, to realise those golden dreams; he was kindly received, and expected an adequate provision; but his hopes ended in a gift of £100, and in 1813 he again returned to Ireland.*

* There seemed to be a prejudice of the most unconquerable kind excited against him, and his very name conveyed something most repugnant to those in power. The kind friend who had the inclination,

He now retired to Balbriggan, in the county of Louth, where he composed and published a short poem on the "Battle of Leipsic;" from thence he removed to Rathfarnham, near Dublin, where he commenced his great work, an epic poem, called, "The Rhine; or, Warrior Kings," in 24 books. To assist in the composition of this work, he purchased the bust of the Duke of Wellington, which he always placed on the table before him, and while he contemplated the features of the hero of his poem, he fancied he felt an inspiration which he sensibly wanted when the supposed cause was absent. This visionary association was common to him in many occurrences of his life. The poem he continued to revise and improve till the time of his death, and he left it as a posthumous work for future publication. He had proposed to publish it by subscription, and procured a number of respectable names, at £3 a copy. Among the rest, he applied to Lord Holland, who declined in such a manner as induced Mr. Trotter, with his usual imprudence, to publish his letter, with severe animadversions, in the Dublin newspapers.

He was now driven from his residence at Rathfarnham, and compelled to seek for a retreat at Tramore, in the county of Waterford. This village stands upon a large and dangerous bay, surrounded on all sides by a wild and desolate coast. It presents an open and inviting harbour of great extent, and frequently allures vessels, unacquainted with the danger, to certain destruction.

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and, as he supposed, the power to assist him, thus states the result of his application in a note, dated May 13, 1813: "I never got a favour, and therefore asked with confidence, and I hope you will believe with sincere anxiety. I had, as I believed, obtained something very good, and leading to something better. But, on naming you, your politics, and opposition to Mr. Pitt, barred a door I thought already opened."

One night, in the commencement of winter, the inhabitants were alarmed with the rumour of a wreck, and Mr. Trotter, ever foremost in a kind and benevolent act, was among the first who fled to the relief of the sufferers. The ship proved to be the Sea-horse transport, returning with troops from the Continent after the battle of Waterloo; unable to weather the western point of this insidious way, she foundered on the sands, and three hundred of the unhappy passengers perished. In the midst of a dreary and inclement night, Mr. Trotter proceeded three miles along the coast, encountering less danger from elements than from a band of ruffian-plunderers, who, like vultures scenting their prey, had hovered near and followed the unhappy vessel as she drove along the coast for several miles. His first service was to save the crew from outrage and plunder till the military arrived for their protection. He received with kindness the surviving sufferers. He had little to give, but that little he freely shared with them. His services on this occasion were so conspicuous, that thanks were returned to him individually for his humane exertions, and they were noticed with due applause in the public papers. But while he thus rendered services to others in distress, there was no one to relieve his own; they now became almost insupportable. His secretary and friend, who had never parted from him for a moment, was compelled to seek for that subsistence which his patron could no longer afford to give; he, therefore, privately withdrew himself, and enlisted into the East-India Company's service. From the distress in which he was now involved, he was relieved by the timely aid of £100 sent by Lady Liverpool. He immediately repaired to London, and liberated his friend. While in London, he applied once more to the Prince-Regent; he received, through Sir B. Bloomfield,

£100, with an intimation that it was the last aid he was ever to expect. Stung with this communication, which he considered to have put a final period to all his hopes, he seems to have changed his mode of address, and with more than his usual folly and imprudence, attempted to extort by threats what he no longer expected from entreaties. They only recoiled upon himself, and deprived him of the countenance and good-will of the last friend who adhered to him.*

After a chequered life of wandering through Wales, he again returned to Ireland through Bristol, and finally took up his residence in Cork, where he proposed to establish "an Historical Register." His plan, however, met with no encouragement, and it was soon abandoned. But neither his disposition nor his necessities allowed him to be idle: he tried one more scheme, therefore, for subsistence. He was persuaded that every view of Ireland was superficial and imperfect, as the tourist merely saw the surface of things. He determined to inspect them more closely; he therefore set out on a pedestrian tour, with a view to publish the result. Accompanied by his young man, he proceeded on foot through the counties of Cork, Limerick, Clare, Galway, and Mayo, exploring all the wild district of Erris, Conemara, and Joyce's country, a solitary and sequestered tract along the western ocean, little known or visited. Here the native Irish

* The last communication he held with this noble friend, who had always tried to serve him at court, was on this subject; his reply was as follows:—"If I were disposed to disobey a positive command, I assure you it would not be on a day when, instead of having humbly to present a poem to which his R. H. most liberally subscribed, I am directed to carry a direct threat of the publication of some work unpleasant to the feelings of his R. H."—It should be stated, in justice, that had received, at different times, nearly £1000 from this source.

were driven, after the confiscation of Cromwell, and retain still that unmixed character which distinguishes them. In this tour he sometimes took up his abode for the night with the poorest peasants, occupied their straw shaken on the ground, which was the only accommodation they could afford for a bed, and shared their potatoes and salt, which was the only food they could offer. It was his good fortune to be able to remunerate these poor people for their hospitality more effectually than by any trifling gift in his power to bestow. He made representations to Mr. Peele, then secretary for Ireland, on whatever might improve or ameliorate the distress of the poor where he passed, and, through his agency, relief was sent to Newport, Prat, Lough-rea, and other places, where the poor had suffered most severely from the contagious fever at that time raging there. For these services he was thanked by Lord Clanrickarde, and other leading persons in that country. From Connaught he returned to Cork, through the county of Tipperary and Killarney, having walked more than a thousand miles in three months, and inspected personally every thing worthy of notice, either in the domestic habits or mansions of the peasantry, or in the antiquities and curiosities of the country. From his memoranda, taken on this occasion, he composed a most interesting tour, addressed in a series of letters to his friend, the Rev. William Liddiard, rector of Knock-marck, in the diocese of Meath, the work to which this sketch is prefixed.

While engaged in the composition of this work, his hopes were supported, and his spirits were kept from sinking, by the very effort of exertion; and, indeed, he displayed a resignation and equanimity highly creditable, by submitting to privations of every kind with a cheerful fortitude. At this time all his means were exhausted,

and his food was supplied in a very precarious and irregular manner. When the hour of dinner arrived, he attended with his family frequently to an empty table, and taking up some favourite author, he read it out for their amusement and instruction during the ordinary period of a meal. He thus, by precept and example, supported their sinking spirits; and they often rose from their mental repast, if not with a feeling of content, with that of resignation, in the hope that the morrow would bring relief. But when his tour finished, as if exhausted both in body and mind, he suddenly sunk into dejection and despondency. He occasionally communicated his feelings and situation to the only friend a hard world had left him. The letters indicate the wreck of a mind worn down by incessant anxiety and hopeless affliction; and, indeed, the circumstances under which he supported existence at this time, would justify the deepest dejection. He had two helpless persons depending on him, for whom he thought it was his duty to provide; he occupied some naked rooms in a decayed house in Hammond's-Marsh, in Cork; the rain penetrated the decayed roof, and wind rushed through the broken windows, rendering his abode as dreary and comfortless as poverty could retire to. His diet was potatoes, salt, and water, with such cheap vegetables as he could procure; the addition of milk and tea were rare, and occasional luxuries; and to provide them, it was necessary on several occasions to pawn the last shirt which remained to him and his companion. His dress was the worn-out remnant of better days, affording little protection against the cold, and scarcely that covering which the decorum of society required. He latterly seldom stirred from his wretched abode, where no one sought him out, and his only solace was to lie in bed whole days, pondering over his misfortunes.

On these occasions, he used to read such works as suited his own sad feelings, and corresponded with his unhappy circumstances. It was remarked, that he dwelt with a melancholy fondness on the lives of Chatterton, Savage, Otway, and such authors as had prematurely perished from distress and want; drawing from their fate a gloomy presage and anticipation of his own. In this state he was visited by that epidemic dysentery which was raging among the poor of his neighbourhood, and which is always found to be most fatal when it attacks the unhappy and distressed, who are predisposed both in mind and body to receive it. He had eaten with unusual appetite two large cabbages, the only food he could procure after a long abstinence, and the next day he was seized with the distemper. He was visited by the physicians of a neighbouring dispensary, and received gratuitously from the institution such medicines as they prescribed: but physic could render little service to a man whose heart was broken, and whose malady was hourly increased by scanty, crude, and unwholesome diet. When exhausted with disease, and unable to speak without difficulty, it was his practice every day to detail in writing the symptoms of his complaint for the direction of the physicians. These statements were drawn up with great precision, and are still preserved by one of the physicians, not only as curious relics of the man, but as extraordinary indications of a clear and vigorous mind, when the powers of the body had sunk under the malady. In a short time, however, his case became hopeless, and it only remained to send for a clergyman, to afford him the last consolation. The clergyman was the learned and accomplished Dean of Cork, who, above the prejudices of mean and little minds, availed himself of no pretext of his rank to evade his

duty, but kindly and assiduously attended as long as his clerical functions could confer comfort to the sinking heart of his patient. But the powers of his mind at length gave way also, and bereft him of this consolation. The first indication was a visionary phantom, which strongly impressed him. One day, while Mrs. Trotter was sitting beside his bed, he fancied a man walked across the room, and passed into a small closet inside it. He earnestly requested Mrs. Trotter to follow the vision. She complied with his request, but could not persuade him it was a delusion of his fancy. He insisted that another person should be called to make further search; and not satisfied even with his assurance, he himself rose from his bed, tottered across the room, and closely examined the closet. Shortly after, he called for his writing-materials, as if some thought had struck his mind which he wished to preserve. He made a vain and ineffectual effort to write, but the pen fell from his hand, and the black ink streamed upon the sheet, and tinged his pallid cheek. He seemed shocked, clasped his hands upon his breast, and, uttering a deep moan, sunk back exhausted on the pillow. This was the last effort at intelligent communication, and in a short time after he expired, on the 29th of September, 1818, in the 43d year of his age.

During his illness, he was constantly visited by a poor woman who sold oranges. She daily and anxiously enquired after his health, and insisted on leaving her best fruit for his use, for which she would accept no compensation. Though apparently in good health, she gradually pined away as his malady increased. When he died, her strength sunk rapidly, and in six days she died also, without any visible disease but excessive grief.

He had expressed a melancholy wish, during his illness, that his remains should be placed near the elm-

trees which shade the walk through the church-yard of the cathedral of Cork; the breeze, as it murmured through the leaves, he said, would sooth his weary spirit, and compose that anxious and perturbed state of mind, which had embittered the last years of his existence. This harmless persuasion of a visionary mind has been complied with, and he lies under his favourite elms, which now sigh over his grave. The few friends, whom his distresses and his abilities have interested, mean to erect a slight monument to mark the remains of genius and misfortune; and, as it will stand close beside the public walk, he will have the consolation of hearing, with Yorick, his monumental inscription read over by every passenger, in all the tones of sympathy and commiseration.

The following inscriptions were written by two of his friends, to commemorate his melancholy fate as well as his virtues:

Sacred
To the Memory of
T. BERNARD TROTTER,
once
Private Secretary
to
Charles James Fox.
May his untoward fate be a Lesson to
Genius.
Like Otway, and Camoens,
He died in Poverty.
Gifted by the Almighty
with superior Talents,
but, alas!
neglected
by too many of those who should have
sympathized
with the Poet,—the Patriot!—
In one word,—the Friend of
FOX!

Stranger, ask you, who lies here,
Who lies within this lowly bier?
'Tis one who felt life's varying woes,
Whose griefs no longer break repose;
But, like his once-lov'd Erin's lyre,
Left lorn, neglected, to expire!
"A man of sorrow!"—But, 'tis past;
The heart's sole chord is broke at last!
And now he wakes,—he slept before;
The phantasma of life is o'er!

In memoriam JOHANNIS B. TROTTER.

Arbor singultu ut ramis agitata susurrat
Singultus misere corde Poeta trahat;
In purâ spargit guttâ quæ rore sepulchrum,
Mentis compressa est optima vox—lacrymæ—
Qui jacet in tumulo cantetur carmine Musæ,
Quæ vetita à tetro dona livore dabit.

In contemplating the character of this ingenious but most unfortunate gentleman, there will be found much to censure, and much to praise. His prominent failing was vanity. An eagerness for popular applause led him into extravagant expence, and an overweening opinion of his knowledge in politics, and his talents as an author, induced him to neglect a respectable and lucrative profession, and devote his time to a pursuit from which he seldom gathered either fame or profit. His modes of thinking were fanciful, and his style of writing loose and declamatory; and there was generally something negligent, incorrect, or imprudent, connected with all he said and did. In fact, he totally wanted judgment to guide him in the great or little concerns of life; in the first he was visionary, pursuing romantic notions of impracticable perfection; in the second, he was weak, the slave of passion, and the martyr of imprudence. On the other

hand, he possessed genius and talent, a quick conception and an uncommon facility of composition; his mind was imbued with a fund of classic images, which an intimate knowledge and taste for the dead languages supplied; but his favourite language was Italian, the beauties of which he felt and understood; many passages in his own writings, drawn from those sources, display great ability and beauty; and had his judgment in correction been equal to his readiness in composition, his writings would be highly and deservedly praised. He had a kind and warm heart, never neglecting an opportunity of doing a good action, and often promoting the interests of others to the neglect of his own. He was capable both of feeling and inspiring strong attachment; every person with whom he was in habits of intimacy evinced great affection for his person, from the prime-minister of England, who expired in his arms, to the poor orange-woman, who died for grief at his death. Qualities which could inspire such extraordinary regard in minds so dissimilar, must have been of a very amiable kind. His manners were gentle, and though somewhat eccentric, were polished and courteous; under all his provocations, he never retorted with a rude or acrimonious spirit, nor in any of his misfortunes forgot what was due to others or to himself as a gentleman. His notions of honour and integrity were enthusiastic before he felt the pressure of pecuniary distress. Even then he was most anxious to redeem a character which a wreckless profusion had compromised. He received at one time the sum of £200 from the Prince-Regent; at another, a similar sum from Lord Holland. The first he immediately sent to discharge his engagements with the Harp-society; the second he divided among his creditors, without appropriating any part of either to his own use. His moral

principles were deeply seated, even when they seemed to be eradicated. He made the only reparation left in his power to a deserving woman. In short, he had a strong sense of the duties of morality; and though he was often led into error and irregularity, he never lost sight of those principles from which he had reluctantly strayed. He was a liberal and enlightened, though a speculative politician; steady to his principles, but not to his party; and his attachment to what he thought the interests of Ireland was most disinterested, ardent, and sincere. His love, indeed, for his native land he carried to a romantic excess: he was persuaded he never could exert his powers of composition in any other country, and, indeed, under this fanciful impression, he always returned to Ireland when he had any work in contemplation, that his imagination might be excited by the presence of fond and congenial objects.

This predilection for his own country, honourable though it be, as a testimony of his national feelings, was unfortunate in its consequences. Had he made choice of the metropolis of England as his place of residence, there can be little doubt of his having procured, by the exertion of his talents, a subsistence honourable at once, and sufficient to secure the necessaries, and, perhaps, some of the luxuries of life. The literary society, established expressly for the aid of authors in distress, would have relieved him from that state to which he was at last reduced in his native land; that land, of which it may be truly said—

> "'Tis treason to love her, and death to defend;"

where the want of nationality, a coldness in the cause of literature, an indifference to the fate of its supporters, or poverty, has left the people without such an asylum for

genius, when persecuted by distress and want. It is but justice to state, that distant as was Mr. Trotter from this resource for talent from the envy and oppression of a "cold world," that he was more than once relieved from this godlike fund. Two of Sir Benjamin Hobhouse's letters, which inclosed the much-wanted aid, being, with many other papers, now in my possession. Mrs. Trotter has also received some relief, since her husband's death, from the same source. Had he been nearer to such relief, his days might have been lengthened; he might not have been cut off in the zenith of his talent, before he had completed his epic poem, so as to render it fit for the public eye; at all events, it is not too much to suppose they would have been deprived of much of their bitterness. As it was, to any application he could have made for help, which, probably, he would not make till reduced to the last extremity, it must be remembered, he could not, from the distance of Cork from Dublin, receive any benefit in much less than a fortnight. This conviction was less calculated to give rise to hope than to encourage despair.

But the circumstance which most strongly impresses the contemplative mind is the extreme disproportion which existed between his actual fortune and that to which he might most reasonably aspire. Descended from a highly respectable and ennobled ancestry; the nephew of a bishop; the brother of a member of the imperial parliament; the friend, companion, and official confidant of the greatest minister that ever conducted a great nation, and in the zenith of his power. Himself a man of cultivated mind, high honour, warm sensibilities, and liberal endowments, starting into life with all the advantages which could flatter an aspiring mind, connection, fortune, interest, talent, and personal merit; and

seeming to touch the very point which placed him on a pinnacle of his hopes: yet, without any known demerit, suddenly thrust from his place; and, after sinking rapidly through all the gradations of a life, short in point of time, but long, indeed, in chequered scenes of varied misery, he was shamefully suffered to perish, in the vigour of life, the victim of actual want,—the pauper-patient of a Dispensary!

WALKS

THROUGH

IRELAND,

IN

1812, 1814, AND 1817.

FIRST WALK,

TO BAG AND BUN, THE LANDING-PLACE OF THE ENGLISH IN 1169, IN THE COUNTY OF WEXFORD, IN 1812.

LETTER I.

Aughavanny, County Wicklow.
June 12, 1812.

MY DEAR L.

HAVING long thought of making some considerable walks in Ireland, to view those natural beauties which abound in it, and to observe the character of the people, I have this day commenced my first tour, the prelude to others, and shall send you the fruits of my observations.

A very small party accompany me, and in describing this, as well as my future tours, I shall always use the term "we," without farther explanation, unless where I venture to give peculiar opinions of my own. I shall also endeavour to give you as much information, and as just views as possible of Ireland, and likewise as much of picturesque description as may be agreeable and necessary.

You will consider me as a stranger, viewing this charming country, with impartial eyes, but not forgetful of the claims the British Empire has on me as a citizen, and an attached friend to her glorious constitution. I please myself to think that no other person has attempted the same kind of task, and, whatever may be its execution, you will not, I hope, doubt the purity of my motives. Divided by parties, Ireland presents many difficulties to a writer. He cannot please all—perhaps none. Neither can he hope to succeed much better in Great Britain. Prejudices on various sides exist. The impartial observer is sure to offend, where he shocks them, and he becomes anathematized, but too frequently for pronouncing truths for which he deserves praise. Yet the field for observation is so fine, and the people of Ireland are so interesting from their history, their misfortunes and the rays of genius, which sparkle through all their disadvantages, that I freely take up my pen, and shall experience unspeakable satisfaction if you think a result at all favourable to Ireland might be produced, by conveying truth in a pleasing channel to the well-meaning of all sides.

Would that a minister or prince might condescend to read these letters which I address to you; they might, perhaps, then derive some knowledge from them, which they could not otherwise acquire; and wholesome truths respecting the

beautiful island, on which I shall write, might thus penetrate the abode of royalty, and the recesses of cabinets!

You know me too well to suppose that I am the dependant of any party, a lover of tumult, of gain, or of popularity. I am a zealous, though humble friend, to our great commonwealth, and whilst other men labour meritoriously for it in various ways, and receive various, and splendid rewards, I am satisfied to set out on my Walks, to extract instruction from the lovely book of nature, and if I can possibly help to relieve the oppressed, how sweet, though unobserved, shall be my reward!

In the month of June, having made some simple preparations, our party set out from the metropolis, on our way to Wicklow, so justly celebrated for its beauties. Dublin is extremely handsome, but its public buildings are too magnificent for the metropolis of so small an island. It has, however, lost much of its splendour, as well as most of the nobles and gentry, since the union, a measure of somewhat doubtful, though certainly well-meant, policy. The morning was cool, and we set forward with great alacrity.

On reaching Harold's-cross, a respectable village, a mile from the city, we perceived on the right a venerable mansion embowered in trees. It was the residence of Mr. John Keogh, of whom a gentleman of our party gave this account:—" Mr. Keogh is a Catholic merchant, of enterprize and

genius. He has realized a large fortune, and lives in happy retirement, in the bosom of his family. He has done more for his country than all the declaimers in the Irish Parliament for half a century. Feeling acutely for what he conceived the cruel and unjust degradation of his Catholic fellow-citizens, and participating in it, he made strenuous and successful efforts to relieve them. He formed one of a committee, which emanated many vigorous, but prudent resolutions, and guided instead of following the population of a great city. It was at last agitated in committee to apply to ministers. Every one objected the probable futility of the measure. Mr. K. dissented. 'Permit me to go, though alone,' said he, 'and I answer for the success of our application.' They assented. Mr. Keogh went to London, and had an audience of Mr. Dundas. He stated, temperately and perspicuously, the wants of the Catholics. That able minister heard him with attention and respect. The Act of 1793 was soon after passed, and Mr. K. derived from his exertions the most heart-felt pleasure. He may be called the regenerator of the Catholic Cause in Ireland, which has subsequently suffered so much by intemperance. This gentleman has a commanding person, fine countenance, and is endowed with a nervous and powerful eloquence. He may be deemed a natural genius; for he soared above a depressing

situation, educated himself, and is singularly happy in private society, in enforcing his opinions by argument deduced from facts and books, though he listens with the gentlest politeness; and every one leaves his company, both pleased and instructed."

As we proceeded we reached Rathfarnan-bridge. The beauty that presented itself to our eyes was great. A charming river ran through a small vale! Lord Ely's improvements, and numerous distant country-houses, crowned by the enchanting Dublin mountains, formed an almost unrivalled *coup d'œil.* The village of Rathfarnan is trifling, and gives no favourable idea of Irish cleanliness. We passed through a pretty country towards the mountains, from which the party who were to have seconded the mistaken and criminal views of Mr. Robert Emmett, in 1803, were to have descended on Dublin. He himself resided nearer the city. This unfortunate and ill-advised young gentleman sacrificed himself, in a lamentable manner, to the offended laws, through the suggestions of low and ill-disposed advisers. Gifted with no common talents;—amiable, enthusiastic, and generous!—he mistook party for public good, and bestowed himself on a designing few, when he fancied he was labouring for his country! How melancholy, my dear L. that genius should thus fall! How must we detest its betrayers! The

sun broke out, as we turned towards the mountains, and our walk became more cheerful, which the above gloomy ideas had somewhat saddened.

To the left, we perceived the modest villa of the Right Honourable John P. Curran, nestled amongst handsome trees, and commanding a fine view of Dublin, its environs, &c.; it formed, amongst many other charming villas and improvements, a pleasing object. The very celebrated character who resided there, became the subject of our conversation. I had often heard and admired his eloquence, and been diverted by his sportive pleasantry and wit. Yet he had never seemed to me happy: too great a desire for admiration, and a temper which had never undergone early melioration and subjugation, were his greatest enemies! He did not read enough to fully cultivate his mind and supply him with sufficient home resources, and, perhaps, his company was too often ill-selected. These were some observations we made on passing the country-seat of an orator who has had great flights, but has also had many aberations in his career. Of Irish genius, it may be said,—if I be permitted to compare it to a flower,—that it blows too soon, and its fruits are consequently too frequently immature! Yet, what is wanting but due cultivation? It springs every where, and has the brightest tints. They certainly do not read enough in

Ireland, and generally leave off at the time study becomes most useful. They decide too rapidly, —often do not think,—but pronounce,—and sometimes lose the benefits of well-considered arguments and clear reasoning, by disdaining the one, and not having patience for the other. Nor is the distinguished character just mentioned an exception to these remarks. In conversation I have never observed him profound, or demonstrative. Ridicule was his favourite weapon, which is often a substitute for more powerful attack, or the shelter for ignorance. He frequently made speeches in private society, and sermons in his speeches. This too was proof of bad taste. For solid genius, I do not at all hesitate to prefer Mr. Keogh. His truly was a mighty mind, which, placed in another sphere, or not having overwhelming disabilities to bear it down, might have regulated states, or reformed a people. But I am delaying; and my party are ascending the mountains by a winding and pleasing road. I hasten to rejoin them.

As we pursued our way the prospect grew incomparably beautiful, till we reached a cottage on Killihu mountain, about four miles from Dublin, where we proposed to breakfast, having provided ourselves with tea, sugar, &c. &c. From hence we beheld a beautiful and extended plain at our feet, studded with villas, noble mansions, and cottages. Here and there a river winded to the sea. Woods were interspersed, and fertile fields of grain. The delightful Bay of Dublin, covered

with many white sails of vessels, going and returning, terminated by the picturesque small mountain of Howth,—the peninsula, and thickly inhabited coast, near Dublin,—charmed the eye. Its blue and glossy surface seemed that of a lovely lake! The pigeon-house and light-house stretched far into it, and the animated appearance of commerce enlivened it in every part. The Black Rock, Dunleary, and Dalhey, with its venerable island, bounded it on the right. At its extremity stood the city of Dublin, sending forth the smoke of early-lighted fires, and having all the appearance of a great and wealthy emporium. Alas! in that metropolis, how many conflicting cares were distracting the hearts of men! What heart-burnings and jealousies! How fatally was the religion of peace just going to be used as a justification for the measures of cold and mercenary oppression! The lovely scene looked less beautiful; and I was willingly prevailed on to enter the cottage, where our breakfast was already prepared by the ever-ready and willing hand of Irish hospitality! Our fatigue rendered it also extremely pleasant. We inhaled the freshest mountain air:—from the open cottage-door we still enjoyed much of the noble prospect of the Bay;—and our kind hostess omitted no pains to make us comfortable. Nor was she mercenary; a very small recompense and a friendly farewell satisfied the good woman, and we resumed our journey.

The road passed amongst these lofty mountains,

and led us to scenery truly sublime. A deep valley was on our right, where we saw the river below roll tranquilly on; the cottages emitting the bluish smoke that winded spirally in the air, or spread itself on the impending rocks, and all the busy stir of happy agricultural mountaineers. As various sounds ascended, all cheerful and rural, it was still more pleasant. The road called military, (as it had been made to facilitate military purposes, since 1798) was excellent; and not only well, but tastefully laid out. We seemed walking in the aërial regions, and to have left for ever the busy and important haunts of man. Conversation flowed unimpeded, and we scarcely thought of the distance we had to go. Certainly, my dear L., I am partial, and not without reason, to this mode of studying nature! In walking, there is no disagreeable sound of carriage-wheels, of horses' feet, of whips, or of unharmonious voices! You are on a just level with nature. Every ditch is enriched with various minute vegetable beauties, which you observe with ease. The smallest note or twitter of the distant or passing bird is heard. You can at leisure contemplate the azure clouds, their changes, and the shadows they sometimes cast! While health joins the party too, to reward the pedestrian toils, the soul becomes, not only more animated, but exalted! We continued to advance along our aërial terrace: every step produced a new change.

As the road began to descend, a very fine prospect of part of Wicklow offered itself. A great scope of country, tolerably cultivated, and the distant Wicklow mountains, formed this landscape. Unfortunately, a solitary barrack struck the eye. It had been erected a few years, and was become useless. It deformed the picturesque scene, and excited no pleasing ideas. Whether marking the turbulence of the people, or arbitrary rule, the object was an unhappy one.

In a short time, however, we arrived at two beautiful small lakes, near the road, called Loughchree. They were surrounded by mountains, and of a pellucid blue. Their shores were rocky, and their environs seemed the residence of peace and solitude! Not a habitation was to be seen! The heath and moss spread a green carpet every where, and clothed the mountain-sides in a charming manner, whilst a small shrub mixed its tender verdure here and there. Not even the solitary king's-fisher, with rapid flight and short cry, broke the calm silence that reigned! Here we partook of some refreshment, and quite forgot the scenes we had left. The rest of our walk was wild and striking, and for nine miles we beheld neither house nor human being. Towards the close of the evening, we reached a valley called Macannass. It extended three miles. A river ran through it, and for lonely beauty, and sweet simplicity, it cannot be excelled. Small farm-

houses, encircled with trees, here and there enlivened it.

This vale was, however, thinly inhabited, and inspired mournful sentiments. We had recently left a city too populous for its wants, and full of misery in the manufacturing quarter, whence employment and happiness had fled. Already the unequal distribution of human industry in this island appeared! By this very route also had the English invaders, once perhaps, made their way to Dublin. We shall now retrace their steps to their landing-place. Since that period, (above six hundred years), what little real improvement has taken place! Have foreign politics, the internal distractions of England, or an original bad system, most retarded it? or has a spirit of vain and idle insubordination in Ireland impeded it? I am inclined to think the country has been little known, and much neglected by the English sovereigns, down to George the Third, who has done much to meliorate it, and for which the body of the people are thankful. But we are arrived at our humble inn, near the celebrated Glendaloch: at the bridge of Aughavanny, where we rest this night, the mountain-torrent rolls impetuously. The scene is grand and striking, but fatigue compels me to bid you adieu.

LETTER II.

Wooden Bridge, County Wicklow,
June 13, 1812.

MY DEAR L.

After that profound repose in our cottage inn, which our mountain walk had conferred on us, we arose this morning much refreshed. The scenery was charming and sublime around us; for the sun had gilded every torrent, and lighted up every hedge and peaceful groupe of cattle. Mountains surrounded us, and the interesting and romantic Glendaloch, or glen of the two lakes, crowned the not very distant view. Its round tower and churches towered in mournful solitude, and its lakes glittered with the dawn's early rays. We proceeded directly there, by a gentle descent and a walk of a mile. The morning salutations in Ireland are very gracious, and the replies are always peculiarly so. To your "Good morning," is always returned to you, "Good morning to you, kindly;"—to "God save you,"—"God save you kindly," and the farewell of *Dia agus smerri wid*, or "God and the Virgin be with you," sounds soft and pious. We soon arrived at Glendaloch. I shall not exactly describe ruins so well known, and so often delineated. A sketch may suffice.

This venerable seat of clerical learning in Ireland is seated in a mountain valley, through which passes a small river. A stream runs past the great

church and tower! Smaller churches are sprinkled around! At the upper lake is one romantically placed, where, many ages ago, a young foreign prince was interred. A few trees mingled amongst its ruins give it a most picturesque effect, as do a glen and waterfall near it, of a diminutive, but beautiful character. The upper lake rolled its pure waters on a silvery sand, and was on various sides overhung with rocks covered with heath and moss. The celebrated bed of St. Bevin is on the left, and romantically and even dangerously placed just over the water, and at a considerable height above. Many fabulous stories are still told here of the good saint, but you, I believe, will readily dispense with them. Tradition relates also accounts of the massacres and devastations made by the Danes in these holy retreats of science and religion. How unhappy such times, when these barbarous and perfidious men thus delighted in violating such sanctuaries, and extinguishing those lights of which they had so much need, but were too rude to respect! In those days they were the best depositories of knowledge in Europe.

The monastery is placed considerably lower in the vale than the church and tower. There are remains of curious architecture still in it. The tower, which rears its head with imposing majesty in this solitary and silent scene, is very perfect. Conjecture has been baffled to account for

these buildings. I think they may have served both as belfries and watch-towers. They showed us the site of a former city, adjoining Glendaloch, and the old market-cross, still remaining. Doubtless the great number of ecclesiastics, students, and servants here, required a large supply of many things, and a sort of market-town would readily be formed near so renowned and great a place as Glendaloch.

Yet, though learning and religion were much and successfully cultivated at that period, it does not strike me that the state of Ireland at large grew improved. The want of one good government, perpetuated disorder and anarchy in the island, and literature was but a single flower that bloomed in the waste. To Glendaloch it is said various foreign princes and scholars resorted, nor could there be a more lovely spot for meditation and application to study. Here Dermot, King of Leinster, sent Lawrence, the celebrated Archbishop of Dublin, when a youth. He was of noble, I believe royal, birth, and it was intended to extinguish all ambitious views in him by placing him here. Lawrence grew a willing and enthusiastic servant of religion and the muses. The meads and groves, the lofty mountains, and sweet lakes of Glendaloch, purified and calmed his mind. He became one of the best and most exalted characters of his time. In the vales of Glendaloch, Lord Grey sustained a

shameful defeat from the Irish chieftains of this quarter, when he first came over Lord Deputy, under Queen Elizabeth. I perceived with pain, in these sequestered scenes, a great avidity for money, and more cunning than simplicity. And yet, my dear L., shall we be angry at the ignorant and perhaps starving peasant, or his family, for this thirst of gain, which has invaded every class of life, and causes almost every man to be estimated by the means in his purse, rather than by the qualities of his mind, or the acquirements of years?

We left Glendaloch highly gratified. Its venerable haunts afforded us many reflections, all favourable to Ireland, and her ancient monastic institutions; for there was great merit in a country which thus fostered seats of learning; where the soul was taught to soar to important truths; to scan the ways of the stars and planets, to study history and nature; in short, to rise to the Deity himself, through all his works, and to acknowledge the littleness of the ambition and the pursuits of men! Ireland in these, and in previous times, when Roman tyranny manacled the earth, was the sacred asylum where religion and science obtained shelter, and the feeble voice of liberty was heard.

On leaving Glendaloch, we entered a fine valley, with a pleasant river meandering through it; we also passed some woods, where the cheerful noise and movements of numerous wood-cutters attracted our attention. The picture was gay, and relieved

our minds from too serious thoughts. Happy privilege of the pedestrian; gradually changing, the scene is always new to him, and the fresh pages of the book of nature charm away melancholy, if it possess him.

Wishing to breakfast, we discovered an humble inn at the river side, and there we heartily enjoyed our meal. The river and its banks were charming, and a fine wood spread to our left. It gave me pain to see here, for the first time, a miserable and dilapidated little chapel. Every edifice dedicated to God ought to be respectable and respected. Want of money was the cause of its ruined state. Having breakfasted, we walked through a long and cheerful vale to Rathdrum. There is a good deal of the flannel manufactory in this part of the county of Wicklow, and a handsome flannel hall, built by Earl Fitzwilliam, at Rathdrum. But the people and their houses are wretched; their cattle small and bad. We learned that the gentry in this county have become great farmers, and that the people are reducing more and more to the situation of cotters, rather serfs, or villains! The war has caused great prices for the produce of land, and has generated high rents or gigantic farmers, with 1500 or 2000 acres in their own hands. But labour is not raised in value, though the cottager lose all his land. He becomes annexed to an estate by the miserable tenure of necessity, and the rent of his roadside hovel is deducted from

his yearly toil. His daily hire is 10*d.*; perhaps less. This is 12*l.* per annum; deduct 1*l.* 10*s.*, or 2*l.*, for house-rent, 10*l.* 10*s.* or 10*l.*, remain to procure potatoes, milk, clothes, medicine in case of illness;—to pay priest,—send children to school, &c. &c. &c.! 10*l.* which the gambler or man of fashion casts away in a moment, in the circles of London, is the sum on which the existence of this entire family depends! Yet the poor Irishman endures all with fortitude and humility, even with a degree of content. His common expressions are, however, very melancholy on enquiry into his circumstances. "The poor, sir, have always suffered." "It is God's will it should be so." "The poor are little thought of in this country." He will then sigh, and go to his daily toil. This system, my dear L., is a sad one! The degradation of the population of Ireland has endured from time immemorial, and they are themselves somewhat to blame for it. They want an independence of mind, which produces independence of station, and, with too indolent and obsequious a caress, they hug their poverty to their bosoms. The cottager and small farmer might make his house decent and comfortable in some degree, which it seldom is, and he might make his garden neat and useful with some good vegetables, as well as adorn it with a few humble flowers and shrubs. No! he prefers sitting at the fire, or in the sun, or a lazy walk to the ale-

house in times of leisure, and leaves his little home as uncultivated and unadorned as his mind too frequently is. The system is erroneous, and too severely pursued by many, of exacting the utmost value of land by high rents or otherwise; but the most liberal of the gentry have a great deal to contend with, in the inveterate habits of these people. If a good lease of a large portion of ground be granted, they let and re-let; they divide and subdivide; and they do not think to improve, so much as to sell the commodity of land at a high rate. The causes of all this, I fear, lie so deep that few English ministries will be fond of analysing them.

The country-people of Wicklow dress pretty well, are in general handsome, well-made, and very sagacious. Their communication with Dublin does not, however, improve them in any respect. Passing Rathdrum, a considerable and respectable country town, we arrived at Avondale, Mr. Parnell's seat. It was made and greatly adorned by the late Colonel Hayes, who possessed true rural taste. This sweet place is charmingly situated, among grounds and woods, undulating in the most beautiful manner. The romantic mountains of Wicklow every where around it, give variety and grandeur to the scene. The house is sufficiently good. You pass through the demesne to see the cottage built by the late Mr. Hayes. The walk to it is

quite charming, a fine river rolling on your left, and the scenery I have described every where in full view: nor does the cottage disappoint expectation. It is large, and made in a perfectly rural manner, thatched and ornamented with rustic wood-work. The river flows immediately past it, and the impending opposite bank is bold and romantic; embowered in trees, and sheltered from every breeze, it seems truly the ritual of domestic peace and of the Muses! With reluctance we left this sweet abode, so far removed from the world's noise, and all its wearisome pomp. The melodious sound of the waters murmuring along, the pleasant song of birds, and the fragrant verdure of every shrub and tree made it most delightful. Mr. Parnell was not at home, but we were received with great civility. This gentleman has distinguished himself by some writings in favour of Ireland, and bears a most amiable character. He has, we heard, set up a woollen manufactory near Rathdrum: but these things seldom do well in the hands of gentlemen unused to trade.

Leaving the fairy scenes of Mr. Parnell's demesne, we regained the road, and, descending to the bridge and rivers, called, "The meeting of the Three Waters," found fresh beauty calling on us for admiration. The descent by the road was rapid, and the picturesque assemblage of mountains, rivers, and woody vales of

unrivalled beauty. Of this spot, Mr. Moore says, or rather sings,

> "There is not in the wide world a valley so sweet,
> As that vale in whose bosom the wide waters meet."

In the vale of Avoca, at the termination of Mr. Parnell's demesne, three mountain rivers unite, and pursue their rapid course to the not far distant sea. May I indulge myself by giving a favourite bard's description of such a river.

> "L'onda dal mar, divisa
> Bagna la valle, e'l monte
> Mormora sempre, & freme
> Al fin, que non torna al mar
> Al mar, dove gli humori acquistò
> E, Dove da lunghi errori
> Spera a riporar."

Accompanied by such a murmuring and lovely stream, we continued, from "this meeting of the Waters," our walk through a most enchanting vale.

At the bridge of the Three Waters we had taken some refreshment in the open air, on a mossy bank, and at the side of a streamlet hurrying and fritting on its way, to be lost in the great stream. We were invigorated and pleased. Wicklow, in its utmost beauty, glowed around us. The road was level and pleasant, and there was no want of wood here, though so much and so severely felt in Ireland. The evening

shadows and colouring fell on every tree, and harmonized the hills and vales by Nature's most bewitching touches. We might have imagined it a sylvian scene in Switzerland, if we had seen happy, independent countenances, and the full plenty of the rural home. As we overtook two small farmers we joined in conversation. They complained of the dearness of land, of every thing being let over their heads, and their wish to go to America in the Spring. They spoke with feeling and propriety; one of them, a man somewhat in years, repeating, that he wished to go to America, and send for his family. I could not help remarking, that he must be pretty comfortable, and that it would be a great change: Why, then, would you emigrate? He emphatically replied, "Because I can never be better as I am. Times promise to be worse, and such farmers as we are cannot possibly stand it long. The gentry think they can never have enough land in their own hands, and what they do not keep, jobbers are ready to take and give fines for, and thus root out the old resident from the soil. Why should we then stay in this country?" I asked him of Lord Fitzwilliam as a landlord? "Pretty well, but no absentee can be a good one. They ruin Ireland. They cannot see the distress of tenants, and the deputy must always remit as much money as he can. Neither can they protect us. They are too dis-

tant, and too full of other things, than being resident guardians to poor Irish tenants!" I sighed heavily, and, impressed with the truth of all he said, bid him a sympathyzing farewell!

The shades of evening fell fast. We scarcely discerned the river flowing beside us, and the birds had long retired to rest. We were, however, perfectly unmolested, and without fear; and quietly pursued our route to a small inn we had heard of. The Irish, I think, rarely commit wanton atrocities on mere travellers—it is generally some private pique, or some bad character inflaming them against a neighbour, which urges them. They seldom rob, as they do in England, on speculation. We traversed the wildest parts of this country without molestation, and as we now journeyed late on our way, we had a proof of the honesty of these people. The air was serene, and moments for contemplation arose. Just then a flute breathed gentle music from the opposite bank of the river; the strain was sweet, and the mournful airs played, recalled the times that were for ever gone. The Irish are very fond of music, and many of them good performers. The flute, the fife, the pipes, the harp are much beloved by them. How strange! and what a pity that music, though practised through time immemorial, and cultivated with success by this nation, does not appear to have softened their dispositions as much as might

have been expected! As we approached our inn, a pretty rural mansion, with an orchard, we came near the borders of the County of Wexford. Of this enchanting Wicklow, I have given you but an imperfect idea. You must see it, my dear L., and judge for yourself. How many visit the Continent, Switzerland, and Italy, and know nothing of the interesting beauties of Ireland! How many go to see, and even live in, Wales, with equal ignorance of this romantic island! Wicklow possesses beauties and scenes equal to any in Wales. Her people, alas! are inferior in comfort, education, and agriculture, but they are brave and ingenious: so much so, indeed, that, in these respects, they fall short of no other nation.

I am truly, yours.

LETTER III.

Ferns, June 15.

MY DEAR L.

WEXFORD, though not so romantic, is a fitter country for agriculture than Wicklow. The land is much better. Property is more equally diffused, and I think I already see the traces of English settlers, in more commodious farm-houses and barns,—better enclosed farms,—and better stock. The strong bonians are still marked and known in this country, and the names of Fitzhenry, Fitzmaurice, &c. &c. &c. not unusual. Our walk from Coolgranny lay through Gorey, a small market and post-town, as also through Comolin, a neat village. We saw crops of flax, corn, and barley, in a very good state. The linen-manufacture has made respectable, but not great progress in Wexford. What a melancholy effect of commercial narrowness in England, to prevail on your illustrious William to interdict the woollen manufacture in Ireland! How much reparation is due to her for that one paralysing and unjust act! As we proceed, I observe with pleasure in this county a great deal of industry and honesty. The Wexford people have gained a good deal of the English habits, and are greatly improved by them. Yesterday,

we observed a great concourse of them at the village of Coolgranny after chapel. It is impossible not to admire the Irish as a people, when you see them well dressed and orderly. The young women were very neat and, in general, handsome, and the young men have a military and spirited air, very striking. Their persons are extremely good, and their manners, (if fatal whiskey does not interfere), mild and engaging. I like their air of independence in Wexford, it betokens more sincerity and better exertions than the extorted and doubtful civility of the slave! Wexford, as far as we have seen, is a fine corn-country, and the farms seem pretty large and good. The cotter system is not so prevalent as in the counties of Dublin and Wicklow. As we leave the capital, things seem better, and the people to improve. As far as we have proceeded, it is evident that the population of the country is immense. It is nothing diminished by rebellion, or war. Gorey is a tolerable town in Wexford, of between 2000 and 3000 inhabitants.

All the small towns in Ireland betray a want of manufacture and employment; which consequently generates much curiosity with respect to strangers, from which even the better classes are not free. Gorey was the scene of an action in the rebellion of 1798, and of a sharp nature. Half the town was burnt and is now re-built, manifestly

to the great advantage of the place. From Gorey we took our way to Ferns, and stopped to take some refreshment near it at a poor cottage. They were kind and civil, but their poverty was so great as to be quite distressing to witness. This excessive misery of cottagers in Ireland cannot be too often repeated, as they represent the whole population.

There is a radical error which, till it be found out and rectified by a vigorous government, not afraid to boldly contemplate truth, will render the English government always insecure, and Ireland unhappy. I am writing, my dear L., for no party. I want not to exaggerate nor to diminish the evils which oppress this country, and far from blaming England, as is vulgarly too much done here, I think many sources of error are internal; but the powerful arm of an enlightened government can alone divert and dry them up.

As we approached Ferns, once the proud capital of Leinster, I felt various sensations. Here Lord Dermot, King of Leinster, the first ally of the English, resided; and here had been the seat of one of the most ancient of the small monarchies into which Ireland, by a most wretched policy, had been time immemorial divided! A small village,—a venerable castle,—and some beautiful ruins of an abbey, alone remain of a city once great and populous! Thus, how fragile

are the works of man, whether you take him in the plains of Asia; the ruins and the deserts of Africa; or in this civilized Europe!

Dermot, King of Leinster, finding himself persecuted by Roderick O'Conner, the nominal monarch of Ireland, (who had entered into the animosities of a petty king, his adherent,) and prompted by two very powerful passions, self-preservation and revenge, fled to the King of England, Henry the Second, for protection. It was granted, and Dermot, having acquired the alliance of the Earl of Chepstow, and some other brave Welch chieftains, returned to Ireland in the end of the year 1169. He lay concealed in the monastery of Ferns, till the English, or rather Welch, force under Fitzstephens landed. The result is well known, but among other errors to which the Irish are prone on this subject, is that which leads them to overlook that, at this very period, the Danes were in possession of perhaps two-thirds of the island,—certainly of all the great maritime towns and adjoining territories.

The Danes, rather than the Irish, were conquered by Dermot's allies, and the emancipation of the island from the hands of those rapacious and cruel invaders was an act which, if it had been followed up by wise measures, and if the radical defects of Ireland had permitted them to operate, had entitled England to the lasting gratitude of this country! However, in Dermot's conduct

there was nothing surprising or unusual. There had formerly been some occasional friendly intercourse between the kings of Ireland and of England, and Dermot followed a very natural impulse in seeking the aid of Henry the Second. It was a simple consequence of the perpetual feuds between the Irish kings, and it is wonderful it had not happened long before. It is quite clear that the English did not, like the Danes, come as invaders, but as allies of Dermot, and probably with the concurrence of the whole Irish clergy!

Almost every country presents similar facts. Seven hundred years before Dermot solicited assistance from England, an Irish king had nearly in the same manner, and probably for similar causes, implored the protection of the Roman general then commanding in Britain. He had been instigated by revenge, and warmly urged the Romans to conquer Ireland. The words of Tacitus are very strong and exact: "Agricola expulsum seditione domestica unum ex regulis gentis exceperat, ac specie amicitiæ in occasionem retinebat. Sæpe ex eo audivi, legione una et modicis auxiliis debellari, obtinerique Hiberniam posse, Idque etiam adversus Britanniam profuturum si Romana ubique arma et velut è compectu libertas tolleretur." *

* "Agricola," says he, "had received one of the petty kings expelled by domestic sedition from Ireland, and detained him

This is at once a proof that Dermot's conduct was not at all singular in Ireland, and also of its deplorable state, from a bad constitution of government seven centuries before the English under Henry the Second arrived. The ease with which that nation succeeded, is another evidence of misgovernment, and the prevalence of selfish views in Ireland of every king. Any thing of public spirit and good government must have almost instantly expelled or annihilated the small Welch forces which at first assisted Dermot. Many centuries before, the Romans, and for similar causes, could have easily conquered the island. Thus, all the Irish can be said to have lost by the coming of Henry the Second of England, was a most defective constitution, which had entailed misery on its inhabitants for perhaps a thousand years, during which period, learning and the Muses had sparkled, but could not enlighten her.

Had not Dermot been persecuted by the monarch of Ireland, it had not then occurred. The Danes had continued to ravage and encroach,

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under appearance of friendship, for any opportunity which might occur. I often heard from them, that Ireland could be conquered, and retained by one Roman legion and moderate supplies, and that it would be useful with respect to Britain, that the Roman arms should be every where in these parts, and liberty taken away from, as it were, before her eyes."

till they had again obtained the sovereignty of the island, or some distant power had availed itself of the feuds of the Irish kings and seized on it. Dermot had carried off the King of Meath's wife; but Roderick, sixteen years after (and long after the lady had been restored), oppressed him, and stripped him of his dominions in an ignominious manner. With such policy—so many little governments—where passion, revenge and selfishness—not public good—directed—Ireland never could have improved, nor enjoyed any share of tranquillity or prosperity.

The ruins of the castle of Ferns are still grand and imposing. They command an extensive view of the country. We were shewn in them a small apartment on the ground-floor, still very perfect, and which seems to have been a royal chapel, or some peculiar state-room. The roof is beautifully arched, and the whole of its Gothic architecture and ornaments are strikingly handsome. This ruined castle's walls are very strong, and nothing but wilful dilapidation could have injured them so much as they are! The mode of building in ancient times in Ireland appears to have been calculated for duration, and in some manner resembles the Roman method used in Britain, by grouting them, and pouring in loose shingle and lime. This castle has suffered greatly in very recent times, by a barbarous practice of taking away parts of it for common use. In the

unhappy rebellion of 1798, the rebels seized it, and planted cannon on the highest tower, but did not hold it long. The ruined monastery where Dermot awaited the coming of the English, is even in its decay very beautiful. Tradition says it was built by the Spaniards.

We were happy to learn that great harmony prevailed between all parties at Ferns. Accident introduced me to the Rev. Mr. Redmond, priest of the place, who related to me a curious little anecdote. When pursuing his studies, and finishing his course of education in France, he had spent a summer in Bas Poictou, where General Bonaparte, then a thin, slight young boy, was. He had slept in the same room with him six weeks, and perceived nothing shining or engaging in him. He was generally employed in making machinery, which he placed on a small water-course. As the party were one day shooting, Bonaparte, who was not very active, fell into a brook five feet deep, which he endeavoured to leap across. He was nearly drowned, when Mr. Redmond immediately discharged his piece, and presented the end to him, by which he saved his life.

Thus, in the hands of a poor Irish priest, hung, for a moment, much of the future destinies of Europe. I asked, "Had the general ever recollected this service, and sent him any mark of his gratitude!" Mr. R. said, "No;" and added, "I

assure you, sir, I do not admire his principles." Has not this enterprising officer's fate been a singular one, my dear L., from the time of this escape from drowning? Having ventured every thing, and, to accomplish his end, scrupled at nothing, however foul and revolting to humanity—having seized on power, by iniquitous and fraudulent steps, and having attained great celebrity and great temporary dominion, he is just going to cause his own downfall, by provoking all the powers of Europe against him. Without the mind of a legislator or statesman, he has grasped what he knows not how to hold, and attempted, by mere military authority, to do what it is only the province of intellect to accomplish! A vain and ignorant undertaking! If this remarkable man draw down on himself severe punishment, from the violated laws of nations, he may yet have to regret that the good priest of Ferns saved a life which after all was one of splendid anxiety, and may terminate by years of incessant remorse!

At Ferns we found a tolerable, small inn, but were treated with some contempt, and little civility. Pedestrians, I now plainly perceive, are not well received at inns in Ireland. The Irish are too much given to respect external splendour, and the pedestrian is liable at their inns to be considered a very suspicious character. He may be deemed a tax-gatherer, or play-actor, or runaway, or rebel;—for they are fond of stigma-

tizing a stranger in this way. They do not understand independence of mind and character enough to respect them justly, and what they would never do themselves, they conceive impossible for others, at least with any good cause and respectable motives. Ferns was, however, extremely interesting to us, as the ancient seat of the kings of Leinster, and in particular of Dermot. Here was conceived the plan of introducing the English into Ireland, which has been of such important consequences to both.

The Welch force landed in the county of Wexford in May, 1170. Then Dermot, who seems all along to have been pitied and protected by the clergy, issued from his hiding-place at Ferns, and boldly bid defiance to his enemies. The cruelty of Roderick, in basely putting to death in cold blood the son of the King of Leinster, (one of the most promising youths of his time), as a poor revenge against Dermot for procuring himself assistance, almost inclines one to pronounce this nominal monarch of Ireland a pusillanimous tyrant. It seems to justify all that Dermot did, and to shew that he resisted an odious despotism, weak, but malignant, and quite inimical to the real happiness of the people!

Ferns, after the event of the landing of the English allies, became a city of great consequence. Dermot was not only restored to former

power, but obtained much more. As the ally of England, he appeared in a new and formidable light, In his palace the most important councils were held; and it must be remarked, that this monarch, too much and very unjustly decried, proved himself faithful and honourable in all his engagements with his new allies.

In the city of Waterford were celebrated the nuptials of Strongbow, who was espoused to Eva, the king's daughter: and in this now lonely and humble village of Ferns, were once assembled the Earl of Chepstow, the King of Leinster, the gallant Fitzstephens, Hervey de Monte Marisco, Raymond le Gros, and many other illustrious and long-departed characters. The marriage of Earl Strongbow to Eva, evinces that Dermot had formed an honourable and becoming alliance, and that no ideas of brutal invasion or lawless conquest instigated the English. It is observable that the chief opposition made to them, on their arrival in Ireland, was by the Danes, in their cities. They did not willingly relinquish the hold they had so long possessed on the unhappy Irish. They defended the great maritime cities with considerable vigour, till they found resistance unavailing, and what the Irish kings and people could not do for centuries, was in a few years achieved by an English force, acting with discipline, union, and constancy. By the

policy pursued by Dermot King of Leinster, the power of the Danes in Ireland was for ever annihilated.

Our visit to this once renowned city of Ferns, my dear L., has drawn me into some historical disquisition, which I hope will neither prove tedious nor uninteresting to you. Many and violent prejudices exist in this country on the subject I have treated. How happy should I feel if men's minds could be harmonized and enlarged, as to the past, in both countries!—that all here would correct false ideas, and bury unfounded resentments in oblivion; and that, on your parts, Ireland should be deemed a respectable ally and friend, not a turbulent dependant!

Believe me ever, &c.

LETTER IV.

Newtown Barry, June 16th.

MY DEAR L.

THIS morning we left Ferns. I paid a farewell visit to the Rev. Mr. Redmond, who was extremely sick and in ill-health. I shall probably never behold this good man again. He is journeying calmly to a better world. His abode bespoke very limited circumstances, but he shewed a degree of fortitude and resignation very honourable to him, and very different, I imagine, from what his celebrated acquaintance in Bas Poictou would manifest, if adversity reach him. Mr. Redmond was supported by religion and an unclouded conscience. Those who sacrifice all for ambition, prepare for themselves an old age of exhausting inquietude, and no resource in the hours of sickness.

We found the charges at our small inn high. I observe that they exact nearly as much in a miserable one as in the best. Independent of poor fare, you are charged also as much for bad accommodation in rooms, &c. &c. as for good. The principle of exacting as much as possible, pervades great and small inns in Ireland almost universally, instead of giving the traveller fair value for his money; and if an imposition be once established, it is never retracted.

Add to this, that the master, and mistress, and family, are generally too proud to pay any attention to guests themselves.

We had a charming walk to Newtown Barry, a few miles distant from Ferns. The country looked poor, but tolerably cultivated. We passed through Claghamon, a small village, and soon arrived at the Slaney, a very beautiful river which runs to Wexford, past Eamiscorthy. This charming stream rolled placidly on, and we discovered a path-way along its verdant banks. The day had improved, and the cheerful rays of the sun glistened on our way. The waters of the Slaney were of the purest blue, and we reaped all the advantages of pedestrians, by finding a short and delightful road to Newtown Barry. Thus are the real goods of life distributed more equally than is too often thought. The noble may roll in his carriage, or taste the luxuries his palace every day affords; but the pure enjoyments of nature, arising from admiring her freshest beauties immediately around one, are not his. The prospect before us was every where cheerful, and we were pleased with every thing. We had left Ferns, and all our historical enquiries behind. We thought no more of kings and generals—of unhappy feuds amongst chieftains—and the long past dreams of ambition and power! The shrubs and wild flowers smelt sweet, and the song of small birds was sometimes heard. But Ireland

in general wants them, and is indeed too bare of hedges and trees to afford them much shelter. The want of trees in this beautiful island gives the pedestrian great and frequent pain. It makes the loneliness of his way often most melancholy. This shews that the country has undergone miserable devastation on all sides. I impute it also partly to that disregard of home, springing from various causes, which I have already remarked as distinguishing the Irish. It also, I fear, points out the deplorable uncertainty of property, which has so often unsettled the island. Venerable trees, protecting and surrounding the farm-house, are too seldom seen in Ireland; it generally stands bleak and uncomfortable, a memorial of what the Irishman has been, and too often is—a comfortless and unprotected being in his native land.

As we advanced, we saw the beautiful little town of Newtown Barry, situated on our admired Slaney. It is small and prettily planned, and does great honour to the proprietor, Colonel Barry. Above all, it is charmingly ornamented by trees in the centre street, and a rivulet runs through it. In the evening we walked up the river to the right of Newtown Barry. The sun had set, and the scene was altogether one of the most pleasing we had seen. The fine improvements and woods of Colonel Barry, adorned the banks of the river, which glided along in silent

beauty. All was harmony and serenity; the birds had retired to rest; and the cattle were slowly returning home. Oh, my dear L., who would exchange such scenes for the gaudy but unreal joys of fashionable life, or the various pursuits of insatiable avarice! We had a quiet lodging and kind usage in a small private house at the skirts of Newtown Barry, and retired to repose, greatly pleased with what we had seen.

In the morning a fair enlivened the town; woollens, crockery-ware, and cattle, were the chief objects of sale. The Irish language is spoken almost generally in the county of Wexford; we heard it every where in the fair. Is it not surprising, that in the very part where the English first settled, this language should to this hour remain and flourish? It marks no great cruelty in these first settlers or their descendants; and it is evident there was no extirpation practised. Yet are not these English frequently painted as unrelenting destroyers of all that Ireland held dear? Too often, and too long, have they been considered so here for the peace and improvement of the country. But let an impartial mind turn to the bloody scenes enacted by Pizarro, and a cortes in New Spain, and it will acknowledge that the allies, who were introduced by Dermot, King of Leinster, acted on far different principles, and intended, if the turbulent passions of the day had permitted, a friendly incorporation with a

people, their natural friends and allies, and not the bloody and unfeeling devastation of those enemies to mankind called conquerors!

The same religion also remains in Wexford as in the time of Henry II., which had been implanted in this island by its venerable and virtuous Apostle, Patrick, and which, in such a part of it, manifests at once the great consistency and firmness of the Irish in this point, and also a tacit degree of toleration in England, even after her own change in that respect, and notwithstanding the unwise laws, and severe persecution set forward by ministers and parties in England, certainly not well consulting the public good and happiness of the empire.

We were happy to find much religious harmony in this county, where, some years ago, greatly the reverse had been thought to exist. Both parties may be ashamed of their temporary violence and errors, and may have discovered that malignant discord is not religion, and that as the two leading churches in the empire, which a fraternal spirit ought to unite, are sincerely attached to monarchy, their best policy is to defeat the views of any future fanatic sects, by wise and manly concord.

Leaving Newtown Barry, we took the route to New Ross; we saw on our way, with much pleasure, great improvement in agriculture. The land was, however, poor, but let at from a guinea

to thirty shillings the acre. Flax is a good deal, but not sufficiently introduced, and seldom more than a quarter of an acre in a farm is cultivated. There is, nevertheless, a little every where. We learnt that the Farming Society had done much good, and greatly advanced agriculture in this county. Tithes have been a subject of complaint for a long series of years in Ireland. On this subject, which you have studied successfully, I might well refer to you, my dear L., for instruction, but as I am distant from you, I shall hazard some ideas, and cheerfully submit them to the correction of your better judgment. The circumstance of the great body of the nation professing a religion different from that of the pastors to whom they are payable, has caused them to have an invidious appearance. Much declamation has been uttered against them, and Protestant ministers have conquently been placed in a painful and even dangerous situation, which that excellent and respectable body ill deserve. Tithes are but a portion of rent deducted from the landlord, since their establishment, and paid to the clergy of the established church in this empire. Remove them, and the landlord instantly raises the rent; that is, claims the portion now paid the clergyman. The wretched tenant's situation is deteriorated, not improved: for the minister never, or rarely, receives the full proportion of his claim.

I should propose that a law be enacted to require every incumbent to grant leases of twenty-one years of his tithes at a just value, which should hold good notwithstanding any change of the minister; and it would be desirable that he resided, and received it, himself,—the delegation of receiving his tithes to a species of oppressor too well known in Ireland,—the tithe-proctor,—has occasioned much misery, and half the outcry raised against tithes. The Protestant clergymen, of all men, should not act the absentee, or leave too much to inferior agents—the collection of his income.

There is unfortunately, in Ireland, too great a love of power, rather than of honest independence. Every inferior agent, when clothed with any degree of it, too soon shews a disposition to oppress his countrymen. The tithe-proctor, or some farmer, often contracts with the minister for his tithes;—a most pernicious custom! He becomes a scourge to the afflicted, and a terror to the weak. He goes out armed with law; and perverted and made callous by a little brief authority. He takes notes payable at a certain time, and the victim is already bound in his hands. At the appointed day, if he does not, or cannot pay, he proceeds against him; add to this, the payment of a rack-rent; of county cesses, often little beneficial to cottagers, or farmers;

and the contribution his feelings and duty require him to give his own pastor; and we cannot wonder if this victim be maddened, and commit improper and criminal acts. This is also a scene of torture, varying in degree as the crop looks well or ill, and as human industry, aided by Heaven, has been successful or not. Thus commotions spring up; and have for a long time sprung up. Government, gentry, and clergy, are harassed, and the petty and malignant despot, who has occasioned so much of this confusion, concludes by stigmatizing his victims as rebels, and denouncing them as ready to receive the foreign foe! A lease granted for twenty-one years, which could not be broken, and the sum stipulated paid to the rector himself, would, I think, rectify all this, and extirpate in Ireland a truly venomous race among her own sons, who disregard their countrymen and neighbours' happiness, and distract the whole country round them.

Sincerely respecting the Protestant clergy of Ireland, I have often grieved that they should be unjustly blamed, or exposed to odium or danger! Nor is it to be wished that they should, by any commutation of tithes, become the mere pensioners of government. The bond which joins them to the people, and which, in my opinion, may be made a pleasing one to both parties, would be dissolved. The Protestant clergy would become more and more absentees, where

they had few or no flocks, and would cease to have any interest in the soil around them. Their independence would vanish, and the power of great men would become more and more uncontroled. It is not patriotism to exclaim against and discountenance tithes in Ireland.

I venture to think, my dear L., that I have demonstrated where the real evil lies, and that an Act of Parliament, such as I have alluded to, would do more to relieve, and consequently tranquillize Ireland, than an army of police-men, or all the bands of orators who have spoken against them or called for a commutation, would do in centuries.

Uncertainty is that which most of all is afflicting to landed property, of great or small denomination. The tenant at will never improves his land much. He knows not the rent of next year. Give him a good lease, that is, security that he shall enjoy the fruits of his labour, industry, and ingenuity, he grows contented, and gets independent.

Tithes are a varying exaction of an uncertain annual rent in the hands of the scorpions I have described. Change their character; fix their value for a proper time; put an end to their variations; and the Irishman will repose in his cottage, will grow attached to the minister, his second and benevolent landlord, and no longer his fluctuating oppressor, by the cruel hands of

some greedy and cunning neighbour. Assassinations, those frightful crimes in civilized society, will be less heard of, and his majesty's government itself in Ireland may rest with more ease.

Our way to New Ross was, on the whole, uninteresting, so that, perhaps, you will more readily pardon my digression on tithes. Here and there, however, symptoms of improvement pleased. We saw a small wet spot of ground broken up with great industry, for the first time, perhaps for centuries, and preparing for paring and burning. They meant to put cabbage-seed in it. A nursery for fruit and other trees, very flourishing, and which sold a great deal, was also a grateful sight. Orchards are forming through this county, and many happy results from these beginnings may be hoped.

We found many weavers spread through the cottages, and the ever-cheerful sound of the shuttle often enlivened the way. The farmers manure with lime in considerable quantities. The people, as we passed along, were civil and respectable, but very curious. We observed schools at all the chapels as we walked along, and education attended too very generally. The youths of Ireland are not to be deemed ignorant, but they too much lose, as men, all they have acquired in their earlier days! Many causes concur to produce this. The cares of a miserable life too soon seize on the adolescent youth. He

oppressed and barbarised by his wretchedness. The learning he has gained is soon obliterated, and his understanding no longer cultivated, at the time it grows capable of reflection and reason. His own levity and presumption but too much contribute to this return to ignorance. He cannot get English books to read, and too often forgets how to do so, if he had them. Books in Irish are not to be had;—a want, in my opinion, much to be deplored: I would cultivate the human mind by every mode. The best authors,—the noble ancient poets, drest in their own interesting and expressive native language, would be greedily read by the Irish who had received any education. For their sensibility, quickness, and comprehension of intellect, are truly admirable! Never, in any spot, could be more justly pronounced the poet's lines!—

> "Full many a gem of purest ray serene
> The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear,
> And many a flower is born to blush unseen,
> And waste its sweetness in the desert air."

Have you not often dwelt, my dear L., on this faithful, though beautifully melancholy picture of a great portion of human creatures, which Gray, by the magic of four sweet lines, exhibits to the mind's eye? Partaking of the poet's fire yourself, they must have claimed the attention of your feeling mind in no ordinary degree. Ah!

will you not then second my feeble efforts in holding up this picture to your countrymen, which I have applied to Ireland? Would that you could penetrate and be admitted to the cabinet of the minister, and say, "Let not the gem be longer buried in the ocean! the flower blush unseen, or waste its sweetness on the air. Your mind is benevolent and just. Repair the wrongs these people have suffered under a bad system! Dare to be liberal and wise,—the terms are synonimous. Give this unhappy race the rights of men, many gems will sparkle, many flowers bloom, and your name go down crowned with lustre to distant posterity."

We arrived, at the end of this day's walk, at a large commodious farm-house, fitted up as a country inn, and propose reaching New Ross to-morrow. The appearance of this house, and some others we had noticed, (far above that of the common Irish farmer's abode), gave the idea immediately, that we observed pleasing traces of English respectability and comfort impressed here. We heard now, very commonly, Strongbonians spoken of, and began to consider these parts more interesting as we proceeded towards the spot where Fitzstephens first landed. It is historic ground, and I shall hope you will traverse it with me in idea, and find pleasure from farther observation and research! We are now glad to partake of a homely meal in an old

fashioned, but clean room. I shall also be glad to repose, and heartily bid you at present farewell. Believe me, &c. &c.

LETTER V.

New Ross, June 17.

MY DEAR L.

We started this morning with great alacrity for this town, one of the principal in the county. The walk did not afford much beauty of prospect, or any thing curious. We rested half-way at a small cottage on the road-side, and I shall relate to you the story of its inmates, convinced that you never have disdained, "the short and simple annals of the poor." As we entered this humble abode, we saw it to be destitute of furniture and comfort. A respectable young woman, with two fine children, sat at the fire-side. She received us with a melancholy but hospitable welcome, and soon procured us potatoes, for which we gave her money, at a neighbouring house: such was her poverty. After sharing our humble repast at her fire-side, we asked what caused her to live thus solitary, and in so much wretchedness! "My husband," she mournfully replied, "a few years ago had a good farm. I was a neighbouring farmer's daughter. We

married and were happy, and even rich, for people in our way. Two years before our lease expired, our land was privately taken over our heads. When it expired, we suddenly found ourselves cast out on the world! Our stock and means were soon wasted away. My husband, finding himself reduced to be a miserable labourer and cotter, on the land which was lately his own, and had been long his family's, could not bear to remain in this country. He resolved to go to Newfoundland, to the fisheries, and to return in two or three years with what he could make. I could not blame him. I went with him to New Ross, and saw him sail from it. Here I came back,—in this cabin, as you see it, I must live. My father gives me a little assistance, but cannot do much. My husband may never more return, and then, said she, looking at her children, I may yet wander on the roads for charity. God only can help me; but it was hard to lose our land."—*Ex uno disce omnes.* I suppose hundreds of similar cases exist in every county in Ireland.

In my third letter, I dwelt on the miseries attendant on too great a competition for land. It is dreadful, when it is made a commodity to be thus sold. It can never be as a moveable and perishable one, but has something of a sacred and solid nature.

The landlord is rather the guardian and trustee, than the avaricious merchant,—or should be

so. His territory contains numerous families, who cultivate it and pay him yearly rent. They are attached to their farms by every tie. Beautifully and truly has Mr. Wordsworth described their feelings in the passage I quoted in my letter on Agriculture. Shall they all be disregarded? Would not the loss of his mansion and demesne throw a dark colour over the life of a landlord? Yet how repeatedly must the christian precept, "do as you would be done by," be violated by them, when they act as in the case of our poor hostess and her husband! Never shall I forget witnessing a scene of sorrow at an old farm-house belonging to one of my relatives, some years ago, on a somewhat similar occasion.

He had determined to remove a tenant and his family, notwithstanding all their entreaties. Though he offered another distant and inferior farm, nothing could console them. An old man, of about seventy, his wife, sons, and daughters, were in tears, in the dwelling-house—others wandering in their garden and fields. An old forth, and its thorn-bushes, were particular objects of their affections. Nature spoke powerfully in their looks. They pleaded,—remonstrated,—but in vain! They lost their abode, and with it, apparently, all happiness.

From these outrages to the feelings, customs, and habits of man, may easily be deduced, as I have said, my dear L., many of the most

atrocious deeds in Ireland. House-burnings and murders are frequently resorted to, as the desperate mode of stopping the system, or of gratifying the revenge of families who have become outcasts and beggars near their paternal soil. No severe acts of parliament, nor extraordinary zeal of law-officers, can remedy a disorder which originates from a primary violation of the laws of nature and of God. How seldom does the legislator or the lawyer look to the source of a malady in the state! A liberal and energetic system in Ireland would take away the cruel, I had almost said barbarous, use of Draconic laws. Of this, my dear L., let your countrymen be persuaded, that as such laws always have failed, so they always will, in tranquillizing Ireland. They are clumsy substitutes for intellectual operations: minute, indeed, and imperceptible, but all-powerful in harmonizing and regulating society. Unfortunately, statesmen are too often the slaves of party; they cannot think or act with freedom; they fulfil their duties half, and are satisfied if they have done something. Great materials often lie before them for the exercise of genius, but they dare not meddle with them. No building is erected for the admiration of posterity; thus mankind dwindle unredressed into their graves!

We arrived pretty early in New Ross. It is a very ancient and respectable town, of from four

to five thousand inhabitants. The houses are, in general, good; the streets decent; and something of a foreign and antique air pervades the whole. This town, about three hundred years ago, had much trade and intercourse with Spain; with Bilboa in particular. The Nore and Barrow unite a few miles above it, and form one very fine navigable river, which flows majestically past the quays of Ross, and affords great accommodation for trade. The environs of this town are beautiful, and the bank, hanging over the river to the right side, is grand and romantic. Though trees are wanting to augment the scenery, few places afford more pleasing walks around it. The market here is very good and plentiful. The country people come in great numbers to it, and are in general well-dressed and respectable, speak Irish, and are almost universally Catholics. The population of the surrounding country appears overflowing. There is a fine ruin of an abbey at Ross, but the modernized church, incorporated with it, destroys the effect. I think it bad taste to do this, and the practice is very destructive to interesting monuments of antiquity. Let what is modern and elegant be so; but let antiquity, with her ivyed walls, her monuments, and all her mouldering relics of past times, stand untouched, that the traveller may read, unmolested, her venerable volume, and rising generations be able to study the history of past times in these memorials they

have left. There is here also a large and new chapel, but scarcely sufficient for the great numbers which throng to it.

New Ross is a corporate town, and is governed by a sovereign and burgesses. These corporations were part of a system to plant Ireland entirely with English settlers, which has failed. They now form a strange anomaly in the state, and serve little purpose, but to create great heart-burnings, and to damp trade and manufactures in towns. It is obvious, that ideas and plans of two centuries ago do not suit the present day; and that these little municipal monopolies but add to the wretchedness of the country. Some concessions have been made, it is true, as to giving the citizens of corporate towns, of all descriptions, a fair chance of enjoying city privileges and honours; but the doors are held by hands unwilling to open them, and few of the proscribed body can squeeze in.

There is little or no trade of an export nature now at Ross, and the place seems to have suffered from the war. The inhabitants are very respectable, and live together in harmony. The proportion of Catholics here, is estimated at about eight to one. This may be taken as the average of the whole county, and not less, I believe, of Wicklow. Time, you see, my dear L., has swept away, in his vast tide, millions of human beings since the arrival of the English in this neighbour-

hood, and yet they have made little impression on the language, religion, or mind of the country. Princes, lord-deputies, and armies, have laboured to change them, but fruitlessly. The vital stock, as if vivifying more the more it was pruned and lopped, now shoots forth its vast foliage over the land; and all the short-sighted schemes of the busy ministers of the day have ended in disappointment. What a lesson to man on pride and ambition! What a rich subject for contemplation, and for the historical student seeking truth, does this astonishing island afford! The method adopted for making it a valuable and contented member of a great empire, in whose bosom were the seeds of vast glory and an imperishable name, was wrong; persecution was used against a spirited, valiant, and feeling people. Some deputies sought fortune; others military credit;—but each had his temporary plan, and too often a narrow and bad one! The mighty surges of a nation's suffering roared round them to no purpose. Prejudice, or mercenary views, shut their ears, and steeled their hearts. They took every account from their creatures; from men prejudiced, or wishing to deceive them. In England the truth was never known. Her ordinary and prescribed channel for information seldom or ever conveyed it. Deputies would not censure their own plans, or ministers readily attach blame to men employed and instructed by

themselves. No wise method was adopted to take the people out of the hands of those petty kings, who had so long, before the English name was heard of, tyrannized over, and barbarized their miserable vassals. The impolitic and unjust distinction of English and Irish was kept up, in an odious and painful manner. The statutes of Kilkenny, in the Duke of Clarence's time, treat the Irish as proscribed savages. The scheme of plantations, which has been entertained by every monarch and minister down to Charles II. denotes the most crude and wretched policy. A nation brave and military, as the Irish naturally are—hardy and intellectual—not like the feeble Asiatics, or brutalized Africans, can never be persecuted into submission. They may be exterminated (though that has been seen to be difficult), but cannot be made slaves, by all the efforts of power or art. Religion, language, manners, a common country—common suffering—keep them blended and united. They bleed, but are not exhausted. From necessity they become artful and insincere. The original settlers from the mother-country, from long residence, become incorporated with them, and increase their strength. The greatness of the population in so small a space as Ireland, gives it an extraordinary energy, which, polypus like, seems uninjured by partial cutting, and defies all attempts to chain and enervate it. The first

English, and their successors, were doubtless brave, generous, and humane; but having fallen into a bad system, they became unwilling, unable, or ashamed to alter it. It is well known that neither kings nor ministers like advice. They weakly construe it into reprimand or assumed superiority of mind, and repel those who could assist them best,—that is, honest men telling plain truth, according to the dictates of enlightened minds.

It is perfectly awful and astonishing to read the History of Ireland, and observe the continued series of error and crime which have been pursued by various ministers, in distant times, towards that island. It is singular that we can find in history also, a case, and of great antiquity, where conduct directly the reverse made a nation happy, and their allies beloved friends. Rollo, Duke of Normandy, was an adventurer, but he was truly a great man. He acquired Normandy, and transmitted it to his posterity; but may be said to have conquered it by his goodness and wisdom (the only true conquest), rather than by arms. He did not suppress the language of the country—law and other proceedings were allowed to be carried on in it:—he established a superior court of justice, where he presided himself:—he reclaimed the fierceness of his followers, and made them live as friends with the natives:—above all, he broke down the feudal system of petty chieftains, and relieved

the commonalty from their despotism,—he conciliated and respected the clergy of the country —the Neustrians and Normans were intermingled by marriages, and good distribution of landed property—the laws he found in Normandy he continued and improved, as suiting the people, and long established,—he contented himself with reforming, extending, and keeping in force the institutions of the country. His name became respected—his lenity and generosity extolled, and he grew the adoration of his new subjects. Normandy was soon one of the most flourishing states in all Europe. This excellent prince reigned thirty years, in happiness and peace, and died in 917. His name is yet appealed to in some old law proceedings in France, I believe, under the form called "Clameur d'Aro," and is still obeyed and reverenced! What an example did not this great and good man set to his successors of the Norman line, who sat on the English throne!

Having objects vividly presented before me in this peculiar part of Ireland, I feel proportionally. It is even necessary to present them to ministers and princes, that other centuries may not slip away, and new wars, foreign or domestic, arise before this example of Rollo may be in some measure followed. Ireland has suffered too long from petty internal despotism, and from ex-

ternal violence. Constant invasions, from time immemorial, I think, and the internal feuds springing from the worst of all governments,—her oligarchy of kings have caused a great part of this misery—indeed, an awfully great one. I have not scrupled to mention the system pursued in succeeding days by English ministers, as also causing much wretchedness. May a happier futurity bless both countries, and these sorrows be forgotten in mutual peace!

I am, my dear L., truly, &c.

LETTER VII.

New Ross, June 18, 1812.

MY DEAR L.

You doubtless know that this town gained an unfortunate celebrity by a battle fought here in 1798, between his majesty's troops and the Irish insurgents. I shall enter into no detail of it, but mention some particulars, which may assist you in forming a just opinion of this nation. It is said the rebels would certainly have succeeded in taking this town, but for the circumstance of vast numbers of them becoming intoxicated. Their plan was not devoid of skill, and they advanced

to the attack with prodigious bravery. Perhaps they only wanted officers to be irresistible. Their numbers were very great, and, it was supposed, had they succeeded, they would have marched to Waterford. They repeatedly renewed their attack, and penetrated into the town in all parts. When the cannon of the army swept a long street, they afterwards divided themselves with great calmness and intrepidity to let the balls pass along. We were told of one man, who stood in a garden near a street where many of the military were, that fired with precision, again and again, each time killing a soldier, till obliged to leave his position.

In another place, we were shewn the spot where a remarkable combat occurred. A very young Irishman was endeavouring quietly to make his way home from a battle in which his friends had totally failed. He was armed with a long and well-made spear or pike; a dragoon perceived him, and determined to cut him down. Others were about to join him, when some English infantry insisted that it should be a fair engagement between the two. The young man opposed his antagonist with great activity and courage; he wounded his horse, and, after a long struggle, finally killed the dragoon. He was permitted by the soldiers to return home without farther molestation. Is not this heroism worthy of the highest eulogium? Nor are the honour and jus-

tice of the king's troops less to be admired, who witnessed, we may say presided, at this very singular combat.

In this battle the people, as was natural, from want of discipline, arms, officers, and cannon, and the circumstance alluded to, were defeated, and lost every thing, if I may venture to use Francis the First's words, "except their honour." In a military point of view, it certainly was a most extraordinary and valorous undertaking for these insurgents, destitute of every thing requisite for an army, to storm a town full of the king's troops. I believe at one time they were considered to have possession of it, and the fate of the day was very doubtful. In fact, the Irish are naturally a military people, of strong and active bodies; bearing fatigue and want of food with great facility, meeting death with calmness and fortitude, sometimes with pleasantry, and, I had almost said, despising it. Such a people are always formidable to their own government, unless conciliated as well as regulated by an energetic hand.

In the rebellion of 1798, I imagine, they rose impelled by two powers: one party inflaming their passions, and duping them by promises; another, goading and distracting them by cruelties and severity. The body of them were attached to the king.

We have often, in our walks, heard the farmer

and cottager praise his majesty in perfect sincerity and with warmth. They remembered his benefits and blessed his name, and as we went in the plainest manner and dress the testimony was quite unbiassed and honest. Such, my dear L., is one of the invaluable privileges of the pedestrian. Men dare speak truth to him as their equal; he becomes their companion and friend, and acquires that knowledge which more polished society could not give. Upon the whole, not more than 2000 rebels are said to have entered New Ross.

From the Barony of Forth* came a formidable body of sharp-shooters, as they have all fowling-pieces in that part of the country, and shoot well. They, however, left Ross before the battle ended, and it is believed did not much engage in it, being disgusted with the insubordination and confusion they saw. As they inhabit a quiet and fertile tract, great provocations must have been given before they were roused.

You will readily perceive what a tremendous instrument the spear or pike must have been, if

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* The Barony of Forth were all forced to join the rebels in spite of their teeth, and after the defeat at Vinegar-hill, immediately returned peaceably to their homes. They are a sober, industrious, well-conducted set of men: indeed, the County of Wexford was generally forced out by the rebel leaders against their will.

discipline and order had reigned among the rebels. On one occasion, we heard at Ross of a party of twenty-five dragoons attacking a body of pikemen. They opened, received them, and closed; not a man of the dragoons was alive in a few moments. Some respectable and impartial persons have, since I was at Ross, assured me, that the people of Wexford would never have become insurgents, being naturally orderly and peaceable, but for the excesses committed by the soldiery, such as the burning of houses, violation of females, and shooting the inhabitants. They have appeared to us people of very good conduct, applying successfully to agriculture, and more comfortable in every way than the people of Wicklow. This justifies such an opinion. But you ask me in a former Letter of your's, was this insurrection of 1798 a noble effort for liberty, founded on a plan likely to succeed? I shall answer you candidly; but assure you I wish to allude to no particular persons; to hurt no feelings; and to excite no resentment in one party or the other. It is an historical view I shall take of that disastrous period.

The successful effort for independence of the Americans had very much animated the mind of the Irish nation! They did not reflect that the cases of the two countries could never be similar. Their volunteers had acted an admirable part, but knew not where to pause; and began to de-

liberate on public affairs when they should have retired to their homes.

The vanity of the nation was raised to a high pitch, by speeches and measures in parliament of lofty import, but little solid good; whilst Ireland was made to assume the tone of a great and independent nation, all within was misery and degradation, and no grand measure was attempted to relieve the body of the people from long continued, and various home oppressions. England was menaced, but Ireland really neglected by her loudest assertors of liberty!

When the French Revolution occurred, a new and worse flame was kindled; then his majesty and parliament wisely concurred in granting great relief to the Irish Catholics, in 1793. Till 1795 the country flourished in an unexampled manner; but the dazzling and infatuating example of Republican France, her victories, and her glowing declarations, speeches, and publications, began to have an effect on a people of equal sensibility; of military talent; and, certainly, long degraded and oppressed. The great grievances of the country had been left unredressed by the champions of 1782, when they had much in their power; pompous sounds had then occupied them: ministers had not much improved the old system: between both, the people still suffered. Ambitious leaders desire no readier materials than a great and miserable

population. Such men arose in Ireland. Charmed, or deluded by the mania of republicanism in France, they resolved to make Ireland a republic, and the ally of France. The plan, it is believed, originated in the north of this country. Doubtless many leading men may have been inspired on this occasion with pure and benevolent motives, but they grossly deceived themselves, or were the dupes of designing and wicked characters, in forming a conspiracy that could not give liberty to Ireland; a thing she was then incapable of enjoying, and unable to support. Many of those who had been actors in 1782 had lost the moment of securing rational independence and liberal connection with England. They now pursued an *ignis fatuus,* and grasped at an impossibility. But minds heated by favourite views cease to reflect: how often do the people suffer from such leaders! An oath, or covenant, was disseminated, and rapidly taken by the people of the North of Ireland; Dublin and its vicinity followed, but for a long time the southern and western parts, the great Catholic body, looked coldly on, and never entirely or fully concurred.

The most inflammatory writings and papers animated the people. The very worst principle, on which to establish revolution,—revenge—was too much and too efficaciously employed. At this crisis, the public mind became more in-

flamed by the indecision, or mistake of the then English ministry. A popular nobleman was sent as Viceroy, who gave hopes of important relief and concessions to the Catholic body. He was suddenly recalled, and all those hopes frustrated. The Catholics were thus thrown into the hands of the conspirators: there is not sufficient ground, however, for exculpating Lord Fitzwilliam from the charge of rashness in his measures. It has not appeared on what plan he proceeded to arrange the affairs of Ireland.

I entertain the greatest respect and esteem for that nobleman; but apprehend he had brought no fixed plan in his own mind to Ireland; and gave way to party, rather than come, as a great legislator and governor ought, with a well-weighed arrangement for a divided country. He was not to follow the mere impulse of a benevolent mind. I believe the Irish party, with whom he acted, had no statesman-like plans; we have never heard of them. Lord Fitzwilliam should, like Solon, have given the fittest constitution for the whole nation, including Protestants and Catholics. He was opening barriers, and raising no mounds. He would have left the Catholics dissatisfied, and the Protestants inflamed. It must be admitted, that there seems a want of plan in the minister himself. Ill events followed. The conspiracy assumed a dreadful aspect. A French alliance was formed. Money

was raised, bodies of men trained and disciplined by night, arms prepared, and a supreme directory of five leading persons created. Had France conveyed a force into the country at a proper time, it is impossible to pronounce the result. It arrived too early, and, by some mistake, the troops returned without disembarking. Suspicion and fear were now roused in the Irish ministry. Great severities were unwisely permitted, and the cause of the conspirators thereby strengthened. It seems to me, if I may venture to give an opinion, that some powerful and commanding genius was wanting amongst these leaders. Such a man might, for a time, have triumphed over England, and acquired glory as Kosciusko did. He would have wanted officers; and envy, perhaps, amongst his particular associates, would have wrought his fall; but in every valley, and on every mountain, he would have met genius and military ardour. If he had made a defensive war, he would have found a Tyrolese or Swiss people to lead, and when he breathed his last for liberty, that people would have enshrined him in their hearts, and the brave English themselves would have respected and pitied him. But no such man appeared. They are the blossoms of a century, and often come too early, or too late in their season, to be enabled to bear such fruit. But the conspirators appear to have placed every thing on a wrong basis.

Just independence, and participation of rights, with a friendly and close connection with England, might have satisfied any real patriot. They sought alliance with the despotic military governments of France, which must have ended in complete submission. They declared against England as a most cruel enemy, though joined by so many bonds of affection, language, intermarriage, and mutual good offices. Their proclamations stirred up the most vindictive feelings, and tended to produce tremendous bloodshed.

The form of government chosen by them was bad, and destructive to liberty. Nor is it probable those directors, who were selected to preside over it, would have held their station long. A love of power, more than honourable desire for constitutional rights, is too prevalent in Ireland. It is the morbid fruit of long degradation, want of education, and of continually defective government. Divisions and bloodshed would have been the fruit of the conspirators' toils, until a French Prefect, or English General, threw his word into the scale, and terminated them.

Treachery, however, (previous to the rebellion of 1798) did more for the Irish ministry than they could do for themselves. They were by it relieved from a perilous situation, which their too loyal adherents had made dreadful. The principal conspirators were arrested, and the

rebellion which followed was rather the effervescence of a warlike and ill-used population, than a regular attempt to overthrow the English government. Nevertheless, many severe actions were fought, and the king's troops were frequently defeated by these mistaken but incomparably brave people. Many heroic acts were performed in a vain struggle which had no end in view. More numerous executions followed than the historian will contemplate with pleasure; and which, in some measure, discredit the ministry of the day, and the lustre of the British sceptre. But the times were awful, and the strides of the French to universal power alarming. I, who well know the disposition of the Irish, can assert, with safety, that they are easily won by kindness, and may be more beneficially governed by it, than by the fear or inflictions of death. These executions left a rankling sting behind, which will long be felt.

The Irish are affectionately attached to their relatives, and long resent their loss. The torture and violences used during the rebellion, though in some peculiar cases of dangerous emergency (from malignant characters directing the people to the worst designs), perhaps excusable, in some degree, yet were to be lamented as offensive to the usages of civilized life, and uncongenial to a free constitution. However, we must allow for the times, and also the alarm French revolu-

tionary violence had given to men of property. The sanguinary proclamations also of the leaders of the rebels must have irritated, as well as terrified, the gentry into the strongest measures of precaution and self-preservation. When lenient measures were at length adopted, the country soon subsided into tranquillity. The principal conspirators were banished, and all parties began to look with horror on past scenes. This country, for a time so convulsed, is completely peaceable and harmonized. I have heard that one hundred thousand lives and more were lost in the whole, between the king's army, the military of Ireland, and the people. But the population does not now appear at all diminished.

In this distressing short civil war various events occurred, as I have heard related on our tour, which place the Irish character in a high point of view. The female sex, with their usual tenderness and fidelity in this island, gave many bright examples of real heroism.

I have endeavoured to answer your question, but not without much pain. This unhappy people have suffered so much in former times, that my heart bled at recalling those recent scenes of misery. True, the chief actors had passed from the stage before I could appear on it; but the sensibility of this people is so great, and they are so easily contented with a little, that I can fully conceive that much pains and art, in addition to

their sufferings, must have been used to rouse them; and that, when involved, they may have been carried too far, and, in the end, been agonized in a multitude of ways. The Catholic body and their clergy, on the whole, remained firm to the throne. They never coalesced with the northern republicans, and this, it may be safely said, saved the state. May such scenes of horror never be renewed, and may both countries learn a useful lesson from the past! The one to make Ireland happy; and against happiness who will rebel? The other, to substitute a juster way of thinking, for any unreasonable antipathy to England, and to aim at rational and sufficient independence, instead of licentious liberty! always engendering, as it does, the worst government—military and despotic.

After I had written so far of this letter, which I began last night, we resolved to go today into the county of Kilkenny, to see Graig, and the beautiful ruined abbey there. It was fine looking weather, and the walk only eight miles. The road is wild, but picturesque enough. Yet it must be said that the want of trees, beyond measure, injures and, indeed, destroys the picturesque in Ireland. Venerable trees, (almost in ruins themselves), hanging over an old castle, or the moss-grown cottage, are always a fine part of the rural picture. The Kilkenny mountains appear to advantage in this walk. We passed

rapidly along a dry and stony road, and soon reached the Barrow, near Graig. It is there a very beautiful river. Graig soon appeared, and has the air of an old Welch village. An ancient castle stands in mournful solitude at some distance. Some small mountains hang over the Barrow, under which you pass along its banks towards this town. The whole population here and in the surrounding country is Catholic. Graig contains about two thousand inhabitants: it has no manufacture, little trade, and seems very poor. The people of Kilkenny are decent, well-dressed, and very civil:—the women handsome. The celebrated abbey of Graignamanah now struck our view. I cannot describe how nobly venerable it looked. The aisles and arches afford beautiful specimens of the Gothic. The windows we thought remarkably handsome. The abbey was well enclosed, and good gates at different entrances. A very ancient tomb is to be seen near the entrance of the abbey. The figure of a man in armour is seen on it, and is said to be Lord Galmoy's. He is reputed, I know not why, to have been a son of queen Elizabeth's. We discovered a very small chapel, built and connected with this venerable abbey. A holy gloom seemed to pervade it. Crimson curtains nearly shut out the glare of day. We observed a few respectable people crossing the grand and deserted aisles of the great building, and enter

this chapel to perform their devotions. Never was place more suited for the solemnity and tranquillity of religious worship. These harmless and pious creatures stayed a short time and retired. I left my companions, and rested half-an-hour in a seat in the gallery. It is a melancholy, yet sweet moment, when the soul is thus abstracted from the world. And the melancholy is pleasing, for in such solitude we converse with the Deity, and repose all our cares and anxieties in his paternal breast.

I rejoined our small party in the ruins, and we set out on our return. As we passed under the mountains, the Barrow again foamed and struggled on his way. An ancient fisherman threw his long line for salmon across the river. The evening breeze rippled it, and sighed along the mountain sides. We reflected with concern that we should never see Graignamanah in its venerable ruinous state again, as it is thought a large and commodious chapel will be formed with part of the walls;—another instance of false taste; for I do not except the celebrated abbey of Tintern, in Monmouthshire, when I say that nothing could be found more venerable and beautifully interesting in the empire than Graignamanah-abbey. I send you a pretty drawing of it with this letter; which a gentleman residing near it was kind enough to give to me.

We returned to Ross, pleased and gratified

with our excursion. In short, my dear L., we are more and more pleased with this interesting people. Far from the metropolis, unmixed and unvitiated;—intelligent, decent, and friendly, they soon engage one's affection and respect. Yet is there a degree of melancholy visible on the countenances of too many, of which I wish every trace was removed. Rents are becoming intolerably high, and every other pressure increases on them. Add to this, that they know they are a degraded cast in the state—know it well,—and feel it most sharply. The high sense of honour this people have, makes them acutely sensible to whatever appears an affront; and they deem their long degradation both a grievance and an insult. They are not, therefore, happy. Statesmen judge superficially, when they say, the lower classes in Ireland desire not political relief. It is to rate their understandings far below their value, and their memory of the past too slightly.

Reflections similar to these beguiled our way, and brought us to Ross in the evening, to a comfortable repast, and welcome rest. How well seasoned by hunger is the pedestrian's meal! How sound his repose! To-morrow we propose going to Dunbroady Abbey, erected by Harvey de Monte Marisco, uncle of the Earl of Chepstow. We are told it is a very fine one, and pleasingly situated. Harvey de Monte Marisco was an able and experienced warrior, who did the English much

service in Ireland, but suffered many vexations, as almost all these warriors did, from various causes. At length, worn out with military fatigues, and disgusted with the world, he formed the resolution of retiring to Dunbroady, which he had built and endowed. There the warrior spent the evening of his days, and closed a turbulent life in cloistered repose.

The pen falls from my hand, and I gladly retire to rest, assuring you how truly I always am,

Yours, &c.

LETTER VIII.

New Ross, June 20, 1812.

MY DEAR L.

THIS morning we prepared for our excursion, by providing ourselves with dinner, which we carried with us. The walk from New Ross to Dunbroady is, at the commencement, very pretty. The views near it are often most beautiful. The country, however, soon became uninteresting, and very little of the picturesque was to be seen. The Irish language is almost universally spoken. We saw many wretched cottages, but no want of inhabitants was any where perceptible. I am sorry to observe public-houses in general too numerous on the road-side. But the absence of trade and manufacture makes many resort to such establish-

ments, as the only way of making money, and the habits of the people in this moist climate too much concur to support them. Intoxication often disgraces and ruins the Irishman, and Mr. Mackenzie, in his admirable ballad of "Will and Jean," too faithfully describes the fate of many an Irish couple.* In fact, drinking spirituous liquors is one of the most prevalent and fatal vices in Ireland. It obliterates all the fine feelings and virtues of youth, and makes them careless of a future state, negligent of their families, and bad subjects and neighbours. I have no doubt that constant and excessive drinking of spirits harden and render the character ferocious. The temper becomes peevish or sullen; industry hateful; and all remonstrance of friends unpleasant. A faithful monitor, who endeavours to restrain the victim to such ruinous indulgence, grows odious in his eyes, and domestic life unpalatable. In the public-house the worst characters too often assemble—the vain, the profligate, and the idle. Low and base flattery sweeten the pernicious glass, as long as the drinker's purse is supplied; and the habit grows interwoven with his happiness. When money fails him, he must and will procure it, by any dishonourable means. His credit must be sustained. The coolness of his reception, when he manifests poverty, at his favourite house, cannot warn or detach him. He grows a dangerous and detestable character in

society. His mind becomes retrograde; and brutality of manners, with too frequently cruelty of heart, distinguish him. He becomes fit for desperate enterprize, for lawless and midnight deeds, and is soon one of the worst members of the state: Death in removing him, ere half his race be run, makes no chasm, and bestows on his family and society the greatest relief they could experience. There is no country where this vice has been more triumphant than in Ireland; but there certainly is much improvement in recent days in this respect. The rebellion of 1798, and the distresses of the times, have given it a check: more civilized manners are spreading. If the legislature amply encouraged the use of malt liquors, by reducing the tax on malt to a very slight one, and the licence on ale to be lowered, while they pressed heavily on distillation; and, if the gentry took pains to encourage the use of good ale, a beneficial change would soon result in Ireland. But the tower of Dunbroady appears, and we hasten to it. We soon approached it.

It had been a large and magnificent abbey. Its ruins are still noble. These abbeys were built in the form of a cross, with a very grand and lofty square tower springing from the central part. The aisles, the windows, the cells, and halls of the friars are very perfect at Dunbroady, and the traveller can scarcely any where discover a more venerable pile. It was the great feature of the

times to erect such buildings. Every violence or enormity of the great was sought to be expiated by erecting them, and they frequently afforded a tranquil refuge when misfortune, or that weariness of the world natural to man at some period or another of his life, induced them to retire there.

The situation of Dunbroady Abbey is eminently beautiful. It is placed at the confluence of the Suire and the Barrow, which form here a noble and spreading stream. Verdant and gently undulating meadows spread around it, and touch the water-edge. The opposite Waterford coasts, and distant mountain-scenery on all sides, render the scene strikingly fine. Alas! it wants the umbrageous foliage which, doubtless, once graced and decorated every walk. Gardens, orchards, and groves, have disappeared. The lonely and almost awful ruins of Dunbroady sit in naked solitude on the edge of the whispering waves. The "pealing anthem" no longer "swells the note of praise." Clergy, attendants, the poor fed at these gates, the benighted traveller, Harvey de Monte Marisco, wandering dejected and old, on the green margin of the lovely rivers, all are gone! No sound reverberates through the lofty aisles—the humblest friar, and the warrior allied to royalty, sleep undistinguished in the grassy grave! Nature still blooms—her vegetative powers have suffered no change; the

meadow is still green, and, with her plastic hand, she adorns the mouldering and yet proud walls of Dunbroady with moss and ivy, and dresses the frowning ruin with careless elegance. Ah, my dear L., dare I tell you how deeply this contemplation affects me! What is man, that he exults in the short pride of a passing hour! Why does he hoard his imaginary wealth, and doat over the foolish accumulation of time! Why does he devote two-thirds of his life to the pursuit of what, at length, he cannot enjoy, or long retain! and which he bequeaths to some secretly ungrateful heir, panting for his departure and the seizure of his wealth. Why does he restlessly seek for some vain and swelling addition to his name, and when he has obtained it, fancy himself elevated above his brother man, till the fierce hands of disease and death convince him how egregiously he has deceived himself! Why does he rage in war, and hurl destruction amongst thousands, making innumerable widows, orphans, and desolate homes in one direful day! Why does he burn for a throne, and seated on it, whether inherited from ancestors, or obtained by a profusion of blood and crimes, why does he despise his fellow-men, and form idle schemes of pageantry, as if he were immortal! Why does he assume the hypocrisy of religion, and, fastening on the frailties of others, disguise his own, and surreptitiously try to forestall the benevolence of

Heaven! Why all these foolish efforts for pre-eminence and power, which cannot last longer than the passing moment! Who was greater, or more honoured than Harvey de Monte Marisco? Who among men is now more forgotten or neglected? We could not any where trace the warrior's tomb! Dark and mysterious eternity—into thy bosom how many millions have passed since this vast globe was clothed with animal and vegetative life by the Creator, and gently impelled into the azure confines of space, to revolve round its brilliant centre, with majestic career! How must the immortal Lord of all despise the avarice, the ambition, and the hypocrisy of creatures born to fulfil his great purposes of wisdom and benevolence, but counteracting them by the meanest passions, and most ridiculous pride.

Harvey de Monte Marisco had been, in the latter part of his career, rendered unhappy by his struggles for superiority with Raymond le Gros, a more successful and popular general. Earl Strongbow, the army, and the English government, had favoured the latter. Harvey, though a great man, appears to have been envious; the fault, in general, of little minds. He was tormented by beholding the success, and witnessing the promotion, of his rival. He long struggled, and not ineffectually, against Raymond's claims to superiority. At length age, and the good conduct and fortune of his popular antagonist,

concurred to make him abjure the world. He retired for ever to Dunbroady abbey, and left to Raymond the undisputed field of ambition and glory. Perhaps he found true happiness at last. Perhaps in the cultivation of a garden, in his walks in the truly charming environs of Dunbroady, in the exercises of religion, and the conversation of learned and good men, he found more pleasure than he had done from the tumult of war, or gratification of ambition. Doubtless, too, he may have had many acts of severity, and some of injustice towards the native Irish, to regret and to endeavour to make his peace with Heaven for: unfortunately, we have no record of this celebrated man's life. We know not who, if any, visited him in his retirement; whether he ever revisited Wales or England, to take a last view of the *natale solum*, or at what age he died. There was, however, something of dignity and just disdain of the world in quitting the stage voluntarily, as Harvey de Monte Marisco did. Too many men cling to profit, to place, and to emolument, till decrepid age makes them despised by their junior rivals, fast treading on their heels, and anxious to run the same career they have done. Harvey was not one of those. We regretted we could not discover the brave chieftain's tomb: we were prepared to look on it with respect, and to bestow on it a tear. He was valiant, and of much skill in war, but his abilities

were not of a shining nature. He was one of the first, and original leaders in the great enterprize of assisting Dermot, King of Leinster, against a weak despot, and his prudence and caution must have materially contributed to its early success. No great blemishes of rapacity attach to him.

At length we took our leave of Dunbroady with a pensive regret. On our return we found a cottage where we made a short repast, and were received with much civility and hospitality. As we had sufficient time, we determined to ascend a small mountain, called Kieve Cailté, in the neighbourhood of Dunbroady. This I recommend to all pedestrians, who despise fatigue as we did, and admire the glorious views of nature obtained by ascending to such elevations. We soon ascended Kieve Cailté, though the ascent was laborious enough. What a prospect from its green and level summit! How animating, how varied, almost divine! On this beautiful and romantic eminence, the insurgents had a camp in 1798, for a short time! This heightened the interest of the scene! Dunbroady-abbey, now distant, lay below us. Its ruins stood in melancholy grandeur on the magnificent river, of which, with its various windings to New Ross, we had an extensive view. Here and there it appeared divided into fine lakes; and a well-cultivated country, speckled with corn-fields, and farm-houses, and villages, on all sides of them. The sun was sinking fast in the horizon. His

united glories warmed and coloured the river, and its seeming lakes, the surrounding mountains, and the far distant sea. The Wexford, Kilkenny, and Waterford mountains, formed a grand view at this golden moment. We descended quite delighted, and pursued our way to Ross. New pleasures awaited us to reward the toils of the day, and as it were, abridge our walk, by making us unobserving of its distance. We had scarcely proceeded a mile, when the moon arose from the mountain vale; she threw her silver light on every cottage, in all of which we heard Irish spoken as we passed through the valley;—the inmates were all usefully employed, and very cheerful. Our walk grew quite enchanting; we saw numerous bonfires lighted up on the surrounding hills and mountains, and their sparkling radiance was wonderfully pleasing. Suddenly the cuckoo, startled by some peasant, or thinking it was still day, flew through the fields near us, and joined her well-known notes to the rural sounds, every where so pleasing to our ears. It was Midsummer-eve, and this practice of lighting bonfires in Ireland on that evening is, I believe, universal, and most religiously preserved. It occurred very happily and opportunely for us. It seems to be a very old custom, existing before the Milesian invasion, and, consequently, long before the introduction of Christianity into Ireland; announcing the future decline of the year, and the

shortening of the days. In dark and remote ages of antiquity, I should also think the sun was worshipped in Ireland, and that the bonfires of this Midsummer Eve were one of the ceremonies of that worship.* Be that as it may, they had a delightful effect on our walk this evening. Among the peasants and farmers we found the greatest urbanity. They directed us with friendly care, and as most of them spoke English as well as Irish, we found no difficulties, though we returned to Ross by a different and more romantic walk than in the morning. The placid lustre of the moon lighted the now reposing world. Every thing harsh in the landscape was softened down. The want of trees was no longer felt; we scarcely perceived the way till we arrived at Ross. We have been greatly gratified by our visit to Dunbroady. How much I regret that you and Mrs. L. could not have been with us! Believe me, however, my dear L. yours, &c.

* The name of Baal is preserved in many appellations in Ireland, and he is supposed to have been the heathen deity worshipped before the introduction of Christianity. The manner of his worship is also indicated. Several places are called Beltony, a corruption of Baal tinné, the fire of Baal. In the county of Donegal, near Raphoe, is a town-land of this name, in the centre of which stands a circular enclosure of upright stones, with an altar, which the tradition of the country points out as having been an altar on which fire was offered to Baal. In the Highlands of Scotland, where Gaelic or Irish is spoken, the tree burnt at Midsummer-eve is called the Beltane tree, and the fire lighted in Ireland is universally called Balthin-

LETTER IX.

Tintern, June 21, 1812.

MY DEAR L.

We left New Ross this morning after breakfast. We previously walked on the heights above the town: hence the wooden bridge made by Mr. Cox, some years ago, is observed, and proves a handsome object over the noble river, flowing past Ross. We explored a beautiful path-way along the bank I mentioned before, and were amused at beholding the lime-stone and sand-boats passing down, whilst large, muscular, and fine-formed men, standing erect, rowed them with the stream: their loud conversation in Irish, and vehement gestures, as they passed, made a novel and animated scene. They return with great labour, bringing up loads of sea-manure and sea-sand into the interior of the country.

It is quite surprising what vast labour Irishmen will undergo, and with very little food. In the river near the town we also perceived great numbers of small cots, in which men were fishing for salmon, which are plentiful here, and sent to Dublin from hence; it is sold in these parts at two-pence halfpenny the pound. Fowls, butter, vegetables, and meat, are also very reasonable in Ross. If no party prejudices interfered, I know

no town more desirable for a respectable and tranquil retirement in Ireland than New Ross. From some gentlemen in it we experienced much civility, and we left it with regret. Having arrived at this point in our tour, I cannot help recurring to a subject which in Wicklow, Wexford, and Kilkenny, has powerfully forced itself on the mind. You will always recollect, too, that I do not give you the theories of the study, but the reflections arising from recent and close observation.

This country seems to me to have been populous from time immemorial. In one mode or another the island has always produced great quantities of food, and it has been reserved for modern days and modern avarice to drain it away by exportation, in a manner very injurious to the great cities, and inhabitants at large. Population is either a blessing or a curse to a state; not, as the ravings of vanity make it, a source of exultation and an undoubted mark of prosperity. It supplies the despot with vassals and soldiers; or agriculture, manufacture, and commerce, with useful hands. From the most ancient history of Ireland we derive no pleasing and satisfactory evidence of its having been at any time well distributed, and happily and generally employed. It may once have been so, for the traces of agriculture on mountains, and the presumption that before the for-

mation of bogs, all the land was in a better state than we have seen it, favour the idea, as well as the hardly distinguished and glimmering tradition that the island was once peaceful and happy. But in the view history permits us to take, we behold the population of Ireland always a source of misery to herself and her governors down to the present moment. Her petty kings unfortunately found in it materials wherewith to form so many little despotisms, and to feed their intolerable pride and rapaciousness. No country on earth exhibits such scenes of anarchy and blood, as Ireland in those times of her kings, of whom she has been so unreasonably proud. Cooped up in a small island, without shipping, or much intercourse with Europe, the unhappy population, victims of not one, but twenty, or thirty bad governments, were literally the materials used by these royal gladiators, wherewith to renew continual battles and invasions. The happiness of the population was little studied by men devoured by all the violent and uncorrected passions of the human heart. "*Quicquid delirant Regis, plectuntur Achini,*" could never be better applied than to the Irish people, before the arrival, and indeed before the name was known in Europe, of the English.

The radical fault in the government of Ireland was such, it could not be otherwise, as to the miserable population. Every king sought

to defend himself or enlarge his territories Could such characters have leisure for introducing manufacture and commerce, and improving agriculture? Their vassals, or rather slaves, were trained to a lawless, violent kind of life, suiting each despot's purpose. The people were consequently unhappy, and, as well as the soil, unimproved. The natural consequence in the end was, that they did not resist the English when they entered the country. The interest of twenty or thirty despots was not theirs. Ireland could have felt no greater blessing than this intervention, if a wise, liberal, and impartial administration of affairs had then ensued, in place of the dreadful system by which her population had been so long previously afflicted. A very different result followed. No English monarch of sufficient abilities applied himself to this noble undertaking, and Ireland's population continued a curse to herself, and began to cause a serious drain of troops and money from England. The great English captains in time became little despots, and joined the Irish chieftains, by assuming their manners and language, and by intermarriages in their families; religion was then the same. The Irish princes still held formidable power. There was but one line for the English government to pursue, and they disregarded it. It was to make the population happy, by imparting English law, privilege, and protec-

tion universally. This was to sap every despot's power, whether of English or Irish extraction. To this purport all the well-disposed, but suffering, people petitioned Edward the First to grant them protection and the English laws, in the year 1278, and renewed their prayers in 1280. The king had the best intentions, but faction prevailed against this poor people, as it has too often done with English sovereigns. Again they petitioned in Edward the Third's reign; again were baffled by the same means. Misrepresentations of this unhappy people provoked the king, and instead of wise concessions and benevolent protection, he treated the Irish as savages and outlaws: we have scarcely any thing on record more affecting than this cry of a whole population to the throne, imploring protection from the despotism of the great men of the day, and nothing more shocking than the refusal of their petitions! These steps, in the reigns of Edward the First and Third, were clearly the acts of the population, guided by moderate residents of English and Irish birth, and they spoke with the audible voice of good sense, pointing out great public good, which kings should never refuse to listen to! Exasperation, perpetual wars and discord, followed the impolitic conduct of the English kings. So miserable had the country become in the reign of Henry Fourth, that we find an Act of Parliament made against the emi-

gration of the wretched population, whilst they could not be admitted to the privileges of the English, as they had implored, provided with sufficient employment, nor in any manner protected from the despots of the day.

In the contention of the Houses of York and Lancaster, by the irruption of Edward Bruce and his Scots, and the frequent bloody civil wars, which England's own want of policy very much nurtured and caused, the population of Ireland was greatly diminished, but still not materially impaired, when the statesmen of Elizabeth's day conceived the most crude and inhuman idea that ever occurred to rational men! Contemplating the perpetual disturbance of Ireland, a country they never had seen, and knew only by misrepresentation, never unfolding, with the hand of impartial consideration, the page of history, and blinded by the false, petty, and mercenary thought of obtaining great confiscations of land for England, of which she had gained sufficient for all her purposes, these men formed the plan of settling Ireland, as it was called, entirely with English. In plainer terms, the plan must be pronounced one of extermination. What a bribe for needy adventurers, desperate soldiers, profligate courtiers, and avaricious men! A whole island! Sancho Panza did not fly to the government of his island with more zeal and rapidity than did this host of locusts. Every man

was in fancy a governor. They construed the decree for settling Ireland, as they would have done an Act of Parliament for destroying vermin. The population of Ireland was to be removed, or cooped up. The spirit of the Statutes of Kilkenny under Clarence was revived, and the impolitic and sanguinary plan of an almost fiend-like devastation of this beautiful island prepared. Much as I revere and admire the glorious character of your Elizabeth, my dear L., I can neither approve of her conduct, nor absolve her from much of the blood spilt in Ireland in pursuance of this detestable and ignorant kind of policy! a policy which had not altogether ceased till the reign of his present majesty, which, like the star of morning, has arisen in this long benighted land, to cheer it with its lovely rays! The population of Ireland presented to Elizabeth and her ministers, the fairest field for exercising talents in government, and for repairing the long course of error in their predecessors! Must I touch a jarring string? Religious party-rancour inflamed these statesmen; her majesty I exonerate from that charge; her noble mind was above the odious feeling, but she acceded to the views of her English ministers, and listened to the misrepresentations of her Irish government too readily. Some expressions of hers are handed down, as encouraging the idea of extirpation by that of confiscation, which I shall not relate. I

love not to dwell on the faults of a truly great character, and whilst in my mind, the unprincipled, cruel, and vicious monarch deserves severe chastisement from the historian, or historic writer, I would throw a veil over the casual blemishes of a great sovereign, encompassed by difficulties as Elizabeth was! I always reverence royalty when it respects itself. The plan of settling, which Elizabeth's forty years war did not accomplish; which the pacific but unfeeling James; the coldly tyrannic Charles; the sanguinary Cromwell, and the voluptuous and contemptible Charles the Second pursued; and from which the virtuous and magnanimous William is not quite clear; at length totally and signally failed! What an alarming and direful precedent in Europe, if it had succeeded; and the once sacred isle of the muses been made a lonely desert! "*Quando desertum, faciunt pacem appellant,*" was always the language of tyrants. What falsehood and misrepresentation must have been used by a thousand petty ones to blind the penetrating and really liberal mind of the immortal Elizabeth! Providence frowned on a plan of "settlement," which must destroy so many of the creatures of its hand, and the more deserving its pity as having endured so much from fellow man! The population of this island could not be wiped away by little expedients and partial military expeditions.

An Englishman, and a great man too, introduced, in the reign of Elizabeth, a vegetable root, which has more counteracted the system of colonizing by depopulating, than all the most vigorous efforts of the Irish could have done. The potatoe was brought to the south by Sir Walter Raleigh, and by its extraordinary spread, has put the question to rest for ever. When vast portions of land were parcelling out, with not much more consideration for its inhabitants than for cattle, this gallant English warrior presented this island with the germ of such inexhaustible future food,* as has contri-

* It has been questioned by many, whether the introduction of the potatoe in Ireland has been, upon the whole, so great a blessing as it may appear to be, and as it has been generally considered. If the facility with which it is obtained, has not induced indolence amongst the poorer classes, and thus helped to keep alive that pride which forms so remarkable a feature in the Irish character; and whether, depending too much upon this food, they are not disposed to indulge in indolence, for which they compromise their health.

The very cultivation of it seems to enjoin the necessary accumulation of every kind of filth and dirt, under the denomination of what the author of Waverley, in his description of Scotland, "*sixty years since*," calls the "family dunghill." The situation of this receptacle of all kinds of dirt, this emporium of corruption, close to the door, oftentimes the only inlet to the vital air of the inmates of the abode, is frequently unavoidable, from the want of back ground to the cabin. When the hot weather sets in, fever is the necessary consequence, aided, I may say perpetuated, by the raggedness and poverty of the

buted mainly to raise up and multiply that immense population we now see, and which has overthrown, by its mighty and overwhelming

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too easily contented inhabitants. Where there are no poor laws, or provision of any kind, for infirmity and old age, and where the wages are but small, and the families in general large, it is hard to blame the cottager, or attribute to his habits or inclination, what probably is the result of necessity. As, however, many of the rich have fallen victims to this terrible scourge of man, it is to be hoped self-interest will induce exertion, and that efforts will be made throughout the country to eradicate the cause. Much has been done in the metropolis. Let the country follow the example, and co-operate in the suppression of mendicity and filth, the nurse of disease. That it is an Herculean task, there can be but little doubt. It is one, however, that is to be performed, provided the higher ranks set their shoulders to the work; provided that every parish would act in unison; be willing to make the necessary sacrifice to receive the aged and infirm under their protection, to employ the young and effectually to check the wandering habits of the poorer classes. Contamination is too frequently spread in Ireland by an intercommunication of families peculiar to the people of this country. The wives and children of those who emigrate to England in the time of harvest compose these wandering tribes, or at least add to the number of the licensed beggars, and like them, wander through the island with their families. The women with a kettle, the children armed with a can each, and a dirty blanket fastened round their necks with a skewer, a moving and pestilential clan of degraded and abject beggary, boding ill to man, and repaying the humble but kind-hearted cottager, who gives them a night's rest, or perhaps invites them to partake of their scanty fare, with contagion, perhaps with death!

force, the feeble plans of Elizabeth's and her successors' reigns. The awful hand of Providence, which acts by mysterious ways, thus stayed and obliterated the designs of iniquitous men regardless of the lives and happiness of millions, and willing to counteract the very laws of Providence, to further their own mercenary or mistaken purposes! That this great well-spring of life can be dried up in Ireland, therefore, no one now thinks of asserting.

Modern governments must all now learn, that extreme compression of a population makes it more elastic. It imparts to it the powerful ingredient of the feeling of self-preservation. The sense of an attack on existence pervades the community like electric matter. If religious persecution be added to this compression, the population becomes invincible, and always foils its government in its attempts to coerce. The conscience of man cannot be assailed with impunity. Thus the whole power of Spain, then the greatest empire in Europe, could not exterminate the population of a few provinces, and a barren march. France could not destroy her Hugonots. England in vain attempted for centuries the plantation of Ireland, and eradication of its people. Population, tortured by impolitic coercion, is capable of the most serious re-action on its government: and that re-action temporary and severe laws never can conquer. It is an absolute absurdity in

legislation to attempt it. Man may be regulated and improved by laws; but they cannot change his nature, and take out of his heart those passions no doubt wisely implanted there.

Many English statesmen have bewildered themselves by endeavouring to annihilate all commotion in Ireland, whilst the cause of these commotions lay in their own conduct. Those engineers in politics have never thought of providing a salutary vent for what was overflowing, and began to be injurious: at length the mighty torrent has reached to their own feet! In the late rebellion of 1798, its awful movement was able, without leaders, without plan, without arms or ammunition, to send dismay into the councils of England; to terrify some individuals of her Irish government into preparations for flight; to invite the foreign enemy, and maintain a four month's war against the whole power of England, her disciplined and well-supplied armies, and the yeomanry and militia of Ireland!

But, on the other hand, a great population ill-managed is equally unfortunate for the country itself. It generates every kind of misery; makes land high, as I have described in my second letter, and labour low; thus inverting the just order of things, and giving to the better classes an unnatural elevation over the body of the people. It affords a theatre for the inflammatory demagogue, and the baleful foreign emissary.

It makes men an article of export in time of war, and a useless drug, in the market at home, in time of peace. Yet, what is so truly venerable? In it are found the patient and hardy cultivators of the soil! The ingenious mechanic and laborious tradesman,—the sailor and soldier, the protectors of the empire,—all the grand support and stay of human life. How melancholy that materials so invaluable should be ill-used by statesmen! How simple the remedies for their disorder! A good system pursued by landholders. Manufacture generally diffused—fisheries encouraged—commerce unshackled, inland and external—a salutary channel of emigration—and the just administration of constitutional and wise laws!

Ah! my dear L., what is it statesmen have so long feared, that has withheld their hands from better moulding the population here? Have they feared liberty? How mistaken! Have they not, by their fears, themselves generated and perpetuated the licentiousness of which they complain, and from which they have suffered. Liberty!—by which I mean rational, internal independence, and security from internal and external tyranny, —is not to be feared by statesmen. She is their safest ally against malignant faction, ambitious leaders, or the foreign enemy. Such liberty I hope may be granted Ireland, by wise and benevolent statesmen in England, before the evening

breeze sweeps over my grave. Then, and then only, will her population cease to be formidable to the empire. Its yet troubled and tumultuous waves will then, after the agitation of centuries, subside. This will prove as oil scattered on their rough surface, and all will be peace, strength, and wealth. But trifling measures can never operate these great results. May Heaven inspire the hearts of your countrymen, my dear L., to bestow, and also fashion the minds of men here, to receive, with gracious and mutual good-will, such inestimable benefits! The sublime feeling of attempting, in the humblest manner, to accelerate such a consummation, almost overpowers me!

As our conversation and various reasoning on this interesting subject drew to a close, we saw the distant towers and battlements of Tintern Abbey. The cheering view of the sea behind it, and the verdant vale and beautiful village of Tintern, appeared peculiarly delightful after a long and fatiguing walk on a dull road. We had dined, in a small farm-house, on bread and butter, which we carried with us, and some milk which we procured. Do not smile at our simple fare; we relished it much; and pedestrians learn cheerfully to partake of what they can get.

It was the close of evening as we entered the village of Tintern. It was a peaceful scene;—a scene, I am sorry to say, too unusual in Ireland.

Neat and good cottages, with fine trees before them, in one large street, with all the appearance of happy, decent, and well-employed inhabitants, struck us with pleasing surprize. "Here," cried I, "is what applies to our conversation. Here is a portion of Ireland's population well-managed and happy. There will be no insurrection against the Lord and Master of this charming spot. Here are all the marks of a wise and beneficent hand;" and in this I found I was not mistaken. The whole scene—the beautiful abbey situated on a small river surrounded by woods and lovely meadows; a rural church at a distance, embowered and hid in trees; and some farm-houses in the true English rural manner, pleased us very much. We almost fancied we saw the great Earl of Pembroke, the founder of the picturesque abbey before us, arrive, dripping from the sea, and making his pious vow to dedicate a religious building to heaven in gratitude for his escape. We felt in some measure proud in treading the ground which received, at that period, one of the greatest and best men England ever saw, William Mareschall, Earl of Pembroke, the guardian of his king, and the friend of the people!

We soon found an hospitable roof in Tintern, and in a pleasant little room, whence we could see a great deal of its simple and captivating beauty and village scenery, we lost all sense of fatigue as we drank our tea. But it is quite

time to conclude this letter, and bid you heartily farewell.

I am, &c.

LETTER X.

Tintern, June 22.

MY DEAR L.

THE golden beams of the sun this morning poured fresh and encreased beauty around this place. I was sorry to perceive some symptoms of decay in the village, and found the proprietor of Tintern Abbey, to which his mansion is annexed, did not desire the village to be so near it. I grieve to think that in a few years this charming spot may lose all its cottages, and that animating soul of industry, cheerfulness, and peace, which now enlivens it.

Tintern Abbey belongs to Mr. Colclough, who was once confined in France under her late ruler's fantastic and ill-tempered decree. Mr. Cæsar Colclough, a former proprietor, had greatly encouraged manufacture in Tintern. It once possessed thirty-six looms. Linen, diaper, checkjane, and woollens, were woven in it. There was a yarn market and market-house here—now no longer existing. Col. Colclough encouraged the

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best workmen from all parts. There is still a good number of looms, and the village is yet respectable and interesting. It stands on a gentle declivity, running from bottom to top of it, and commanding a sweet view of the Abbey and demesne. The perspective is curiously beautiful from our window, as the figures rise or descend this pretty street, lined with fine trees. The inhabitants are orderly and obliging. Opposite our door is a family of Palatines, descended from those brought over from Germany. Their large figures, good clothing, tranquil manners, remind one of the Flemings or Germans. At this moment there is an excellent rural family-picture across the street at their house. Some of the females sit on a bench under the shade of their own trees, knitting and sewing. The young men are preparing to go out to their farm: their horses are ready, good conditioned, and well taken care of. A respectable looking farmer, the father, directs them.

After breakfast we went to see the Abbey. It has nothing striking within, and is quite small compared to Dunbroady. We thought, however, that the arches of the windows and aisles were very handsome, and the top of the tower afforded us one of the finest views of the sea and country which we had seen. It is called the Lesser Tintern, to distinguish it from the Abbey of the same name in Monmouthshire in Wales, whence

its founder supplied it with monks of the Cistertian order. Though its interior is not very striking, it presents externally a most beautifully picturesque as well as venerable object, on every side, and adorns the lovely valley, at the extremity of which it is placed, in the highest degree. The abbey came to the Colclough family in Queen Elizabeth's time; I know not exactly how; perhaps by purchase from a family of Powers, who had contrived to eject the friars. Lady Colclough treated us with great civility.

Having wandered through the demesne, which is wild but not the less interesting, sufficiently to gratify ourselves with various views of the abbey, we resolved to walk in the evening to the spot where the English force first landed, which we understood was scarcely four miles distant. A plain and cheerful dinner awaited us in our village cottage. Pleased with all we had seen, and particularly with this abbey, we enjoyed it much. The evening promised to be fine, and, exhilarated and refreshed, we set out on this long wished-for excursion to Bag and Bun. Are you prepared, my dear L., to join the party, with all the anxious feelings we possessed? To view the promontory —where that army landed which decided the fate of this kingdom? In my first letter I spoke of tracing the steps of the English. Come then in idea, and examine with us the interesting ground, where these heroes landed. We shall soon arrive

there! I have called them heroes, for if we consider the smallness of their numbers, the military renown of Ireland, its populosity, and the turbulent character of its people, their enterprize must be deemed bordering on romantic, and proceeding from the most heroic fortitude and valour. Robert Fitzstephens, the leader of the little band, was a Welch gentleman of great valour and generosity. Though distressed, he had refused to join a Welch chieftain in an insurrection against his sovereign, and rather than yield to his request, had suffered a long imprisonment. He was destined to be the first means of opening the way for the acquirement of a noble island for the same monarch.

In the summer of 1169, and month of May, he embarked with thirty knights, sixty men in armour, and three hundred archers, probably at Milford, for Ireland: and after a speedy and prosperous voyage, landed at Bag and Bun. Our walk there was short and pleasant, passing through Featherd, and very soon afterwards conducting us to the sea. We sprung forward to the spot! It is a small promontory, neither very high, nor projecting far into the sea. A creek, with a fine sandy bottom on one side, and a rocky inlet on the other, where the water is pretty deep, were the facilities Fitzstephens met with for disembarking his men. A considerable hill, on which is now a martello tower, (one of the formidable

defences against France in the late war), overlooks the promontory. There is a trench, yet perfectly plain, cut across its neck, and something of a rude bank thrown up.

When we found ourselves on this long-desired place, a thousand sensations arose. Fitzstephens and his men had made a voyage of discovery, as well as a military attempt. All was new to them. They were completely to succeed, or annihilation awaited them. They had no spies—no agents in the country. Its language was unknown to them. If their ally the King of Leinster was unfaithful, or fickle—if he made peace with his superior monarch and oppressor—if death or sickness had overpowered him—if unanimity and patriotism were roused from their long and oblivious lethargy, and the country forgot their selfish broils, on the appearance of an external enemy—if Roderick had been deposed or died, and a great man, a warrior and stateman, had been found to fill his place—if any or all of these cases had occurred, the destruction of this warlike little band was certain!

Like Leonidas and his Spartans at Thermopylæ, they might have fallen honourably, and sold their lives dearly; but not a man had returned to tell the tale in England. They remained a few days without seeing enemy or ally. A few country people gazed at them with stupid wonder, and doubtless vexed to see petty ma-

rauders, pirates and Danes in this way, little calculated what a change now threatened Ireland. Fitzstephens and Harvey de Monte Marisco acted in this awful moment with equal prudence and courage. They remained at the promontory of Bag and Bun—made no incursions into the county of Wexford—gave no provocation to, and committed no injury on the harmless people; and, resigning themselves to the care of Providence, firmly awaited intelligence from Dermot. That king had spent a winter of almost intolerable anxiety in the monastery of Ferns. His situation there was still more distressing than that of Fitzstephens on landing. He had applied to England for assistance. This must be known, if not then, very soon, to the monarch of Ireland, his enemy. Certain destruction must follow, if his new allies disappointed him or delayed long.

Neither Henry the Second nor Earl Strongbow had acted in a decisive manner with the King of Leinster. The former was engaged with foreign affairs and wars; and at this time seems to have thought Ireland of too small consequence to bestow much attention on it. He left Dermot in a great measure to his fate. Strongbow acted a cautious and chilling part, and the most dangerous of all others to the King of Leinster;—he waited to see what would happen, and coolly sent his uncle, the gallant Harvey de Monte Marisco, to report to him the success of Fitzstephens, or to

perish in his dangerous enterprize! All depended therefore on Fitzstephens. His delay had already mortally alarmed Dermot, but at length he learned, with transports of joy, that he had arrived at Bag and Bun. His fears were at an end. He instantly dispatched his favourite son Donald, with five hundred men, to his assistance.

Until Fitzstephens and his men were certain that it was the King of Leinster's troops who advanced, some painful moments must have occurred. Donald's presence assured and saved the gallant band. The army of Dermot met the English warriors as friends, and this their first introduction into the country was neither by violence nor fraud. It was no invasion of a happy, well-governed, and prosperous people; but a junction, in open day, with the forces of an ally, according to treaty and stipulations. It was not like a modern conqueror and adventurer's practice—the rousing the populace against their government and institutions which had made them happy, then sharing with them in bloody plunder, and finally deceiving and destroying all;—but it was supporting an injured ally, who had claimed protection against, perhaps, the most defective, and (whenever it had sufficient strength), the most vexatiously tyrannic government in Europe! On the Continent such an occurrence would have been obvious and natural. The insular situation of Ireland, and the false glare which has been

foolishly thrown round the wretched despotism of Roderick O'Connor, and his brother kings' governments, have given it the air of an unprovoked and unprincipled invasion.

As Maurice of Pendergast, a valiant Welchman, had immediately followed, and soon joined Fitzstephens with ten knights and two hundred archers, his whole force, when joined by Donald, amounted to forty knights, sixty men in armour, and five hundred archers. The King of Leinster soon followed his son, and received his new allies with equal joy and respect. Their treaty was ratified perhaps on this very spot of Bag and Bun, and mutual satisfaction prevailed. They resolved to march to Wexford, which was promised by treaty to Fitzstephens. That gallant leader sent round his shipping to that harbour, and all matters being fully adjusted, the united army of Irish and Welch departed from this memorable scene on their way to Wexford, which was garrisoned by Irish and Danes.

We could not but admire the successful valour of this gallant man. His superior mind made him discern all the advantages of a junction with Dermot in Ireland; but few would have had heroism, like his, to plan and execute the expedition with six hundred men. His great soul comprehended the benefits and the risk in one glance, and intuitively weighed both rightly; neither was he dazzled with one, nor overawed by the other.

Nothing is more easy, or usual, for common minds than to under-rate services or exploits which, once performed, appeared no longer difficult. Had not Fitzstephens made his daring attempt, Henry the Second might not have acquired Ireland. Strongbow was by no means an enterprizing character, and would probably have never crossed the sea; and Henry, in the multiplicity of his cares and vexations, might have forgotten that such a person as the petty King of Leinster existed. But the ways of Providence are inscrutable and grand. The means chosen by it, to work great ends, are selected by wise and invisible hands, and when they are accomplished, feeble man has only to admire the beauty and simplicity of the plan, of which his limited views afforded him no conception.

As we set out on our return from Bag and Bun, you may suppose Fitzstephens was the theme of our discourse, nor did we forget Harvey de Monte Marisco, the Ulysses of the expedition, the scene of whose last mortal retreat at Dunbroady we had so lately visited. Ungenerous and bigotted must the mind be, which cannot admire heroism even in a supposed adversary. I hope Fitzstephens is as much a favourite with you as he is with me. We shall presently see him in a most exalted point of view at Wexford, where we mean to follow his steps to-morrow, or the ensuing day. You will, my dear L., I am

convinced, do me the simple justice to think, that I write my sentiments of the past and present in Ireland, without any ignoble wish to court or gratify an English or an Irish interest in this country. I labour, or think I labour, for the interest of the empire. I reverence the valour, the integrity, and ability of Fitzstephens, as I do that of a Roman or Grecian. Posterity has to bestow on his name that meed of applause, heretofore too sparingly granted, and too long delayed. Assist me, my dear L., to raise the long slumbering warrior from his tomb; and let us choose the freshest laurel to crown his venerable brow. Shall not your muse, too, grace the long past glories of one of Briton's elder heroes? Such pious efforts to revive and increase the honours of departed, and too much forgotten valour, may not be grateful to some unreflecting men, and will not attract the approbation of the voluptuous courts of modern times, on which I avow I look with calm indifference, but they will not be despised by the generous and just. Mrs. L., too, shall bestow a poetic wreath on our hero, and her charming music thrill to his praise! From the moment Fitzstephens landed, the empire became one. Behold him then, as a true hero, consolidating its strength, civilizing a distracted portion of it, and devoting the rest of his life to these sacred purposes! He rises in awful majesty to our view, and we see the expansive minded

patriot and the undaunted general combined in him! The utility and solid glory of Fitzstephens' successful enterprize, far exceed in value the splendours of the reigns of an Edward the Third or Henry the Fifth. Their exploits have left no trace behind; but those of Fitzstephens have contributed to form an empire, to give England a powerful domestic ally and friend, and to relieve Ireland from the many-headed hydra of, perhaps, a hundred despots, preying on her vitals, and perpetuating the grinding slavery of her devoted race!

As we passed through the neat town of Featherd, the sky began to be overcast, and to threaten rain; we quickened our step, but in vain; a torrent descended, and we became in a short time completely wet. This is one of the casualties a pedestrian must prepare for; nay more, it teaches him to be a man; to bear patiently, and with cheerfulness, something of the hardships so many of our fellow-creatures, ill clad and badly fed, almost daily endure. We bore our wetting with perfect resignation, and arriving at Tintern, were quickly dried and refreshed. You will not wonder, however, that I hasten to bid you farewell.

LETTER XI.

Tintern, June 27, 1812.

MY DEAR L.

We have employed several days in enjoying the beauties of Tintern and its environs, and experienced much civility from Lady Colclough, the present venerable lady of the abbey mansion; from her worthy agent, and from the clergyman of Tintern, Mr. Archdall, and also from the friendly priest of this parish, Mr. Doyle. Mr. A. inhabits a beautiful and tasteful cottage near this, and in the bosom of a charming family, and the most exemplary performance of his duty, leads a respectable life, well meriting, however, a more exalted situation in the church. This hospitality, and pleasing converse, have left an impression not to be erased. We have heard him too in his modest church, impressive, and eloquent, so that those of his rural audience (a small one no doubt) that

"Came to scoff, remained to pray."

His church is absolutely buried in trees, and is highly picturesque. Mr. Archdall lives here in modest seclusion, as a gentleman and clergyman, and is beloved by every one in the vicinity. His kindness has completed the charm of Tintern.

The Priest lives three miles from this, and has a very genteel house and handsome gardens. He

complains that the excessive population of his parish makes his fatigues very great. You may, probably, imagine that this body of men are sunk in vulgarity, and deeply tinged with antipathy to England. It is by no means so. We have breakfasted with several on our tour, and have met unaffected hospitality, and polished manners, in their modest abodes; sound understandings and excellent education distinguish great numbers of them. A better system would make them a host of strength to the government. As it is, they contribute powerfully (it must be admitted) to regulate a population possessing great sensibility and warm passions.

I should now mention, that this village produced, some years ago, a painter of some merit and natural genius. His name was Carey. He attempted historical and scripture subjects, and painted some altar-pieces for country chapels; we have not seen them, but we learn they do him credit. We saw some kind of cartoons done by him in chalks with spirited outlines. Poor Carey had bad colours, no encouragement, and having never been farther than Ross, had seen nothing to expand and improve his ideas and taste. He had considerable humour, and had contrived to read a good deal. But Carey made an unhappy marriage, and like Burns, also fell a victim to early intemperance. His memory is still respected. This is the short story of one of the flowers, "born to blush un-

seen," which have long sprung up, and thus withered in this island. We found several young men and lads here respectable scholars. To two of them I lent Pope's translation of the Iliad. They both read the poem through with very little delay. The latter of them singled out the passage between Hector and Andromache, and said, "it was very mournful." Among these people, where there has been any cultivation of their minds, I find a strong taste for poetry, and much sensibility for its beauties.

We dedicated this evening to Clonmines, an abbey, or monastery, in ruins, a few miles from Tintern. We pursued great part of our way by a small, wild country road, which had its own peculiar beauties, and frequent fine bursts of views of the sea. The remains of the monastery are most extensive, but have not the grandeur of Dunbroady, or elegance of Tintern. They are also scattered over a great deal of ground, and have therefore less effect. They are placed on an arm of the sea. I have observed that almost all these abbeys and monasteries are situated near water. It is always a pleasing object to the contemplative mind. At a certain period, in Europe, a great cry arose against convents and monasteries, doubtless not without considerable reason; they had accumulated enormous wealth, and in England and on the Continent of Europe had become, in many cases, I fear, lax in discipline

and morals. But the indiscriminate abolition of them never seemed to me politic or just. They afforded hospitality to strangers, and assistance to the needy; and a sovereign goes very far when he prohibits religious retirement to clergy or laymen in his dominions! To the melancholy, the devout, or care-worn mind, such retirement is a first want. The soul, often wearied with the repetition of the endless follies of mankind, and sick of its own share of them, turns to solitude as to a sweet and healing balm. It is relieved by withdrawing from them, and in the study of nature and converse with God, feels new and purer pleasures than it ever had done before. Who can read the soul-moving letters of Abelard and Eloisa from their respective convents, and not feel the value of asylums which shelter the broken-hearted, and cover from the persecuting world the victims of passion or error?

We should not lightly condemn what has been sanctioned by so many pious, and generous, and exalted characters. Is not this world, my dear L., very stormy? oftentimes cruel? oftentimes cheerless?—and should we not regret so many peaceful havens being destroyed? I venerate religion, and do not feel entitled to ascribe any abuses in her institutions to herself. Must not such retreats, to females, have often proved advantageous in the extreme? To contemplative men, and those of timorous and sickly sensibility,—how

welcome! In a word, to mediocrity of circumstances, bordering on poverty, how invaluable! The gloomy grandeur of an abbey or monastery, shaded by majestic trees, and defying the howling storm, well represents to me the soul of man that has found refuge far from his fellow, from unkind relatives, and the treachery and ingratitude of characters once fondly relied on! Still wandering amongst the cells, the towers, and church of Clonmines, the shades of evening surprised us. We hastened to return to Tintern, and I have just time to say farewell, &c.

LETTER XII.

Tintern, June 30, 1812.

MY DEAR L.

THIS morning as the sun was rising, gilding, at the same time, the trees and cottages of this village with his earliest beams, we set out on a small expedition to Barmah, a place of great antiquity here; and by some writers mistaken for the scene of the first English landing. We carried a small basket of provisions, and passing through the village, saw the Abbey, just then struck and lighted by the early rays, to great advantage. Its venerable pile was an affecting memorial of the past. What a change since a Lord Abbot ruled, and sent his

excuses thence for non-attendance on Parliament; since then, the tranquillizing reign of Henry the Seventh, and the cruel stormy ones of Henry the Eighth and of Elizabeth, have passed away. All the wonted inmates of the Abbey appear no more. On the grassy mead, or in the lonely wood, contemplative and religious men no longer walk!

The villagers had not opened their doors, and it was but here and there a little smoke began to steal from a cottage chimney. Human life had not commenced another day of toil. Morning, which, as Hesiod well describes, sends forth laborious man on the high way, was not advanced enough to rouse every body. We passed silently along; the dew yet fresh, and the perfumed air reviving every sense: Mr. Archdall's rural church then appeared, and the church-yard, the silent abode of departed mortality! As we were to cross the Bay of Tintern in going to Bannah, two young gentlemen of this place had promised to accompany us in their own boat. We soon discovered them waiting our approach, and we embarked without delay. The sea was unruffled; its surface glowed with the rich hues of the dawn: never do I recollect any thing more charming: we were cheerful too—undisturbed by cares for wealth, and unmolested by that foolish drawback on human happiness, *ceremony*. We were at peace with ourselves and the world! The boat soon brought us across the bay, but a very violent

current, formed by the tide, had nearly carried us out to sea. Having escaped this threatened event, we landed, and gaily proceeded to Bannah. We reached a very ancient church in ruins, and the long level banks of the main ocean, and were told this was the desired spot. In its way we thought it beautiful; as we had brought tea and bread, we proposed breakfasting in a cottage, and afterwards surveying the ruins; we found one, and a very hospitable reception. The family were all more than civil—they were kind; thus too we see rural life; thus we study a nation's habit and character.

The Irish are universally hospitable in their cottages; and religion and custom have inculcated this virtue as a second nature with them. But then we must not carry this praise too far; curiosity enters into the business also; these islanders see few strangers; they are secluded from the continent of Europe, and find a void they are often glad to fill, by having the company of strangers, especially something, as it is called, of the higher order. They are also cunning and sagacious in the extreme. Various questions are put, with which the poor traveller is often more fatigued than the road; the price of distant markets, news from abroad, the events of war, the business, the occupation of the stranger, &c. on these innumerable questions, suspicious glances and doubts arise. This frequently happens; but, on the

whole, these people are mild and obliging. Our breakfast was extremely good, and we sallied out to view the very ancient and ruined church of Bannah!

It is small, but they assign to it the most remote antiquity. We had no book to instruct us as to this, but I have resolved not to invade the antiquarian's province, and did not greatly regret it. We shall leave him his dates, his conjectures, and pertinacious opinions, upon God knows what! How much would he be displeased did he know I laugh sometimes at his solemn airs, his unwearied investigation regarding the little contrivances of man, and all the monuments of his empty pride,—and the feeble aspirings to live in this world after the mortal scene is closed! I am but the passing traveller, looking on and reading, as well as I can, the great living book of nature, and sending you such unlearned observations as occur! In the church of Bannah, however, we saw with pleasure a striking and beautiful large old vase, or water vessel, of good form and workmanship. The carving was handsome and curious. There was here also a tomb-stone of singular construction, and stone coffin, very different from any thing we had seen. There is an air of almost awful antiquity about the place. The green banks of Bannah spreading along the edge of the great ocean, are in themselves a striking wild beauty of Nature. Here the nascent orator,—

a future Demosthenes, might declaim without fear of disturbance;—the fond lover roam; or man, satiated with pleasures of the world, find a desirable change! I do not quite know, if I am correct in ascribing a celebrated song, said to be written by the late Mr. Ogle of this country, an amiable and accomplished gentleman, to this place. It begins some way thus:

> "On Bannah's lonely banks I strayed;"

and every couplet ends with—

> "Adieu! Adieu! thou faithless world,
> Thou ne'er wert made for me."

So powerful are some early impressions, that I recollect learning the words of this song many years ago when a school-boy. It then seemed to me the perfection of poetry. Its melancholy strain, so often repeated, of—

> "Adieu! Adieu! thou faithless world,
> Thou ne'er wert made for me;"

filled me with mournful pleasure. Careless of the plays and sports usual with boys, I have often pored over these verses, unknowing their full import, but devouring and dwelling on them with secret and indescribable satisfaction! I knew not then what a "faithless world" meant; I had never seen or heard of Bannah's banks, and comprehended not what was misfortune or disappoint-

ment. These were the topics which had inspired the author of this pleasing song. By what mysterious sympathy did I conceive feelings which I never imparted! or by what presentiment did I anticipate the afterwards too well understanding this song! and how unexpectedly did I find myself on the spot which had partly inspired it! All this train of ideas arose in my mind on beholding these beautifully solitary and wild banks of Bannah for the first time! I then remembered the song! I compared the scene with the description, and I felt two distant moments of time suddenly brought together.

Mr. Ogle was a man of fortune, and probably wrote the verses in a moment of weariness, or disgust with a world where he had played a brilliant part. It was another kind of melancholy, when a boy, that I felt, yet sympathised with the lines. Can you analyse these emotions, my dear L., or are they worth it? Is not all melancholy—early, or at a later period,—a foreboding as to the emptiness and insignificance of what is called the world?—and a longing for something immortal and better? Early or juvenile melancholy is in itself something peculiar. The young mind soars into and expatiates on the past and future, and, without fully comprehending, grasps by intuition the nature of immortality and the destiny of man. Most indulgent is that all-seeing Heaven, which

does not permit it to foresee, or understand too much!

Returning from our long and pleasing stroll on the banks of Bannah, we partook of an humble dinner in the same cottage where we had breakfasted. The good creatures were sorry to part with us, and intreated us to return. The evening had changed, and promised rather a tempestuous voyage. Our friends were, however, courageous and active. We passed the formidable current now running in another direction, and arrived near Tintern in safety.

To-morrow morning we purpose setting out for Wexford, and following the march of Fitzstephens and the King of Leinster from Bag and Bun, to that city. From thence I shall dispatch this letter.

Wexford, July 2, 1812.

Two days ago, my dear L., we left Tintern village early in the morning, and crossing the bay near Clonmines by a ferry-boat, commenced our walk through the barony of Bargie, which I think joins that of Torth. They are both remarkable for distinctly preserving the marks of early English settlement, in language, manners, and agriculture, to this day. We saw nothing, however, very striking on the beginning of our excursion. The language, or jargon, once spoken

in these parts, which I imagine resembled that of the old Saxon, is nearly extinct. There is much improvement spreading over this part, and evident proofs of good landlords, and a better system of agriculture. It is to the barony of Forth, however, (the more retired part of the English settlement), we look for what is most curious and interesting. We learn it is still highly so.

In our walk this day we arrived at the very small village of Duncormack, where we dined. It very much resembles a Welch one. It is situated at the bottom of a little hill, and opposite to it arises another. A stream runs near, and the houses have an antique air, and are much better than the common Irish farm-houses. They have almost all good gardens, and vegetables of different kinds; a thing very unusual in an Irish hamlet. Continuing our walk, we saw several small ruined castles on the way. It was a good corn country through which we passed, and the people were industrious and civil. There is in general, however, in the county of Wexford, a want of green crops, and the land is too much exhausted by frequent corn ones. We saw a good deal of clover near Ross, but little elsewhere.

Agriculture in Ireland is, in fact, in the hands of the gentry only, in its improved state. The farmers all want capital; and, indeed, the high rents extracted from them prevents their ever having any. Taxes of various kinds press them

down, and yet men gravely speak of this becoming an agricultural country; as if capital were not as much wanting for agriculture as manufacture. Human existence is preserved by it in Ireland; but till a grand beneficial system pervade and re-animate it, agriculture can never effectually flourish. As things are now, the farmer cannot afford to manure, to buy sufficient stock, nor proper utensils; it is often difficult for him to purchase seed. Potatoes, it is true, flourish every where, but these vegetable roots, by supporting innumerable small farmers and cottagers, are detrimental to agriculture as a science; and causing labour to be too cheap, make the large farmer lazy and improvident—often tyrannical.

Our walks have frequently given us extreme pain, by presenting to our view the persevering and humble efforts of the small farmer, (a character almost unknown in England), to cultivate and improve his morsel of land. At his door he collects what manure he can gather from the ditches—decayed vegetables and dung casually scattered. He has thus, however, seldom more than answers for ground prepared with the spade for his potatoes. He must borrow a horse and plough, or rather hire them, to break up the remainder of his land. To manure this he will pare and burn, if permitted, and scour and scrape ditches. Lime he cannot afford. The vicissitude of corn and green crops he understands not. He

must often use bad seed. Dung from housed cattle he cannot command. Pigs are the chief assistance he has for paying a heavy rent, and these animals he domesticates for want of out-houses. Irish farming is thus frequently a struggle to maintain existence, scarcely worth possessing, under a load of misery from which the small farmer can never rise. Early and improvident marriage contributes to overwhelm him by a numerous and starving offspring, whilst we must allow that he requires some domestic comforts and pleasures, to lessen the bitterness of his lot.

Our route, which was quite different from that of the main road to Wexford, brought us past the residence of the late Mr. Bagenal Harvey; who, for a short time, carried away by warm feelings and mistaken views, acted as a general to the insurgents. He was said to have shewn much humanity whilst he enjoyed his temporary command. There is a romantic story told of his and Mr. Colclough's concealment for a long time in a cave in one of the islands on this coast. The rebellion having ceased, they hoped either to escape to France, or to profit, by some act of amnesty, when the heat of the moment had passed away. They were both amiable and spirited young men, and, perhaps, led into the criminal act of opposing the government in arms, by that military ardour so common to this country, rather than by any deliberate wish for change. Day

after day they spent in their melancholy retreat, till discovered accidentally by the soldiery, they were dragged to trial and execution.

As we advanced farther on our way, musing on this melancholy story of these misguided and unfortunate gentlemen, to whose fate we could not refuse a tear, we began to approach Wexford. A noble country, well cultivated, with fine prospects of the sea, offered themselves to our view. We also saw the noble mansion-house, park, and demesne of the late Mr. Grogan, another unhappy, and, it is said, blameless victim to the fury of the times. Mr. Grogan was a country gentleman of this county, very far advanced in years, and of the most quiet manners, and inoffensive life. The rebels assailed, invited, and threatened him by turns, to induce him to countenance their dangerous and unwarrantable plans. Timid and confused, he is thought to have feared to refuse them altogether, however he disapproved. His property and life were in their hands. We have heard that he unguardedly went in his carriage to some assemblage of them, whether to remonstrate with them on their violence, or to gain time, till the storm abated, is not known. He joined them at Slieve Coilte. In this island, at that distressing period, that species of men so admirably described by Tacitus, were but too common. They are the growth of unfortunate times; avarice and rage inflame them; false representa-

tions were made of Mr. Grogan's conduct; he was brought to a summary trial, and forfeited his life. The good old man died, we understand, with calmness. He must have considered it was shortening his days but very little, and his conscience reproached him with no guilty act. Such are the miserable consequences of party exasperation, heightened by civil war! We had passed through the late Mr. Grogan's park by a pleasant short path, and were near his gateway on the road, when a mournful dead march, played by several instruments in full band, struck our ears; it was solemn, loud, and skilfully played; it electrified our very souls! We stood fixed with horror! This ill-fated old man's death—every thing rose before us. We could not proceed till the mournful music ceased. We passed on, very much affected.

The incident, however romantic it may seem, really occurred as I have described. The present Mr. Grogan is fond of military music, and has a small band attached to a corps of yeomanry which he commands. They happened accidentally to be practising near his porter's lodge, within his gate, as we approached. This music had powerfully affected, and in so melancholy manner assailed us, when just conversing about the late Mr. Grogan, and lamenting his fall. None of the party, I am convinced, will ever lose the impression it made. The association of ideas

was quick and striking. Alas, my dear L., what a direful thing it is, when the bonds of society are dissolved, and government shaken, by designing and ambitious men; thirsting for power they would not know how to use, if possessed of; and careless of the blood to be spilt, and the various tragical catastrophies which must ensue from their attempts. Party rage once unchained, government cannot bridle it, and the innocent suffer with the guilty! We reached Wexford very much fatigued, and found a decent small inn, whence I now write, and were glad to hasten to rest.

Believe me, &c.

LETTER XIII.

Wexford, July 3, 1812.

MY DEAR L.

WEXFORD is a large and populous town of about 12,000 inhabitants. They are, as in Ross, chiefly catholic. Its principal church is handsome, and there is a very large catholic chapel here. It is finely situated on the Slaney, and has considerable trade. The streets are, however, narrow and dirty. The jail is large and new, but ill contrived, though a large sum of money was granted by the county for building it. Here

we found a worthy and respectable Englishman, a Mr. Gladwell, who was jailor, and shewed us every part of it. The accommodation for debtors is peculiarly bad. Cells, with iron doors and stone ceilings and floors, opening into a common corridor, which terminates in a kitchen, shock the spectator, especially when he reflects that all debtors must thus be mingled together, and that the gentleman with refined feelings, torn from a happy, comfortable home, may be consigned suddenly to these dismal accommodations, and to the still more revolting association with rogues and drunken rioters of the lowest class. And who, my dear L., is more to be pitied than a gentleman thus situated, seized by treachery, and oppressed by cruel circumstances? Does he want the misery I have described, arising from ill accommodation, to add to his sorrows?

Wexford has acquired a melancholy celebrity in modern times. Rebellion and bigotry reigned triumphant here for a considerable time, when the rebels had possession of the town, and their camp was not far distant in the country; I believe near the mountain of Forth. The hand trembles at recording the dreadful scenes which occurred here. Inexorable truth compels me to mention them. A furious and bigotted populace, guided and led by some sanguinary demagogues of low class, stained the bridge and streets with the blood of their prisoners.

On entering Wexford I could not avoid feeling something of the sensation I had experienced in beholding the prison of the Abbaye in Paris! Popular fury, with revenge, hatred, and love of plunder in its train, always exercise the worst species of despotism. It is truly unfortunate when the populace can justify their acts, on the ground of retaliation. Fortunately this state of things lasted but a short time. The town was evacuated, the king's troops entered, and soon after, (the rebellion subsiding) general peace and amnesty succeeded to these horrors. The misguided population had certainly been maddened by great suffering, or by the miserable fate of many relatives, and they were inflamed by some licentious and malignant incendiaries, such as will always come forward at those times; but nothing can palliate their deeds at Wexford, and near their camp, where some dreadful cruelties were exercised: the man who could attempt to do so, must be ignorant of all the fundamental principles of law, morality, and religion. He must defend the excesses of brutal and physical force, and, abandoning all principles of government, declare for anarchy and savage life. Yet how much do these dreadful clashings of infuriate parties call for a wise system to obliterate their baneful sources for ever, and cause men, cooped up in a small island, to contend in affection rather than blood?

Wexford, after the death of Charles the First of England, was doomed to suffer severely from the general of the republic, Oliver Cromwell. This man, by religious hypocrisy and great talents, had nearly usurped supreme power in England, and omitted neither fraud nor cruel violence in subduing Ireland. Having besieged Wexford some time, it was surrendered to him by treachery, and, on entering it, he ordered a general massacre. It is afflicting, my dear L., to mention all these painful circumstances; and from these times I return to others with satisfaction.

Dermot and Fitzstephens marched here without any interruption, and prepared to attack the city. The Danes, unwilling to be disturbed in their hold, joined with some Irish dependents, marched out to give the besiegers battle; but when they saw the shining arms, and well-accoutred horses—the discipline and composure of the Britons—they declined the combat, and retired to their city—first burning the suburbs and adjacent villages. The Britons were led to the assault by Fitzstephens; but, after a very obstinate conflict, were repulsed. This hero was undismayed; and, leading his troops to the sea-shore, set fire to his ships, to show his men they had no retreat, and must depend on their own valour.

The next day, having ordered divine service

to be performed in his camp, he disposed his forces with great care, and again led them to the town. The Ostmen and Irish, surprized and terrified at this persevering valour, after some delay surrendered the town to Dermot and his allies, who entered Wexford in triumph. Fitzstephens used his victory with humanity and moderation, and no blood was spilt. Fitzstephens and Fitzgerald (then expected) were jointly invested with the lordship of Wexford and its domain, and Harvey de Monte Marisco was declared lord of two considerable districts on the coast between Wexford and Waterford, which are now called the baronies of Bargie and Forth. To the latter we shall set out to-morrow, and on my return, I shall be able to give you some idea of this first British colony.

Wexford, July 4, 1812.

This morning we viewed Wexford. Its market is most plentifully supplied with fowl, flesh, fish, vegetables, &c. &c. This town is extremely populous, and far exceeds many towns on the continent of the same size, in its appearance of wealth and population. Calling at a shop to purchase a newspaper, we fortunately met with a lady both polite and intelligent, from whom we received considerable information as to Forth, and the road we should take. She seemed fully to enter into all our ideas, and with a degree of promptness and grace which very much distinguish

Irish ladies, even conducted us through her house and a back garden, to a door opening on the street and road directly leading to the long-wished-for Forth. After taking leave of our hospitable and kind directress, whose mind and manners seemed equally pleasing, we set forward with great alacrity. We reflected that we were going to the first colony planted by the English, above six hundred years ago, the estates and territory of Harvey de Monte Marisco, uncle to the Earl of Chepstow, a nobleman of high rank, one of the first who had come to Ireland, and a man of consummate prudence.

This new settlement enjoyed the protection of Fitzstephens himself, who became seated in Wexford, and who manifested humanity and conciliating wisdom in his whole career in Ireland; and who aided, in all respects, as the prudent ally and sincere friend of the King of Leinster—never as the master or the invader!

For some miles after leaving Wexford, nothing remarkable struck us. We at length reached the hamlet called Clinhin; here an immediate change was visible. The houses are large and commodious, much after the English manner; good gardens, orchards, and pleasant fields surround them. We pressed on with great satisfaction, and, walking briskly, soon found ourselves advanced in the barony of Forth. A new scene, to those accustomed to

and funerals are numerously attended here. We saw many rustic tomb-stones, and several of the simple garlands of white cut paper, curiously adorning a number of sticks bent as hoops, so often placed on the grave, as a last mark of respect and affection, and so common in Ireland. For it is observable, that the Irish and English customs and manners are happily blended in Forth. Neither are conquered, but both harmoniously assimilated. There is all the valuable independence of character which has made England a great nation; and there is a great deal of the sweetness and pleasantness of the Irish mind and manner united to it. We entered the farm-house, near this great burying-place, in Forth, where—

> Each, in his narrow cell, for ever laid,
> The rude fore-fathers of the hamlet—sleep;

and found a civil reception from the good woman of the house. She gave us excellent milk, and we carried our own bread. Their accent is very peculiar, but we heard nothing of their ancient and celebrated dialect. It appeared to us very like the retired mountaineers of Wales speaking English. The tone and pronunciation was nearly the same.

The Catholic religion prevails universally through Forth. These descendants of the English, who have never changed their ancient faith,

retain their honest simplicity, and manly characters. They are an excellent people in Forth—are not addicted to drinking—and few or no crimes are heard of amongst them. They preserve their own manner of speaking English, and have never adopted the Irish language. I forgot to say, that the man of the house entered as we rested near the Church of the Island. He was curiosity personified. Not one, but a hundred questions assailed and oppressed us. Had we been Arabians or Chinese, we could not have met more inquisitorial research. His small piercing eyes seemed to dive into our every thought, as he sifted us; and required to know our occupation, our objects, and pursuits. Nor was he easily satiated by reasonable answers to his enquiries, or repulsed by any reserve. Again and again he renewed the attack, till, sufficiently rested after our long walk, we were happy to bid himself and family farewell.

As we pursued our pleasant way through this interesting Forth, the variations of the landscape, by swelling hills and little vales, improved the scene. Hitherto we had proceeded pretty much on a level, as the country is generally flat. The perfume of beans charmed us. The rich crops of wheat and barley, clean and well enclosed, waved on every side. The tender green of numerous spots of flax was pleasant to the eye; and, above all—man happy—and, as he ought to

be, rationally independent,—his walk erect,—his neck unbent; no Irish cringe,—the badge of domestic wretchedness—but comfortable, contented, and orderly. Man, thus seen, gave the scene a dignity and interest which captivated us, and scattered flowers along our way! As we verged towards the sea, new marks of successful industry appeared. Nets, fishing-rods, and oars, were at many houses. These respectable people neglect nothing which assists virtuous independence. We passed a respectable and handsome place of a clergyman, near Carne.

Mr. Nunn has also in Forth a large mansion-house; but, in general, the scene is as I have described it, and certainly surpasses any thing I have ever seen in Ireland, in various points of view, but especially in agriculture. The prudent division of property, excluding the miserable subdivision so ruinous to the advantageous cultivation of land, has also had the effect of preventing that redundancy of population lurking on spots of earth unable to support them comfortably. Their overplus of youth emigrate everywhere, to find new modes of support, and return enriched in middle age, or establish themselves abroad. All this is done by the people themselves; they want no farming societies to incite them; one sound understanding pervades them,—that justness and precision of mind, which regulates agricultural England, governs them here.

Yet I must not conceal, my dear L., that these independent people of Forth did not escape the fatal mania of 1798; and, as I have mentioned, formed a most formidable body of marksmen at Ross, but were soon sensible of their folly, and returned home. It is to be feared, that their tranquillity had been unwisely disturbed, and that some gross provocations had roused them to this otherwise inconsistent conduct. The restless and despotic Joseph, Emperor of Germany, certainly goaded into insurrection the peaceable and agricultural people of Flanders:—such people are difficult to move in such manner, but are terrible when they come forth in their strength!

The people of Forth did not, it is probable, forget their ancestors. They might have fancied the intrepid spirits of a Fitzstephens, an Harvey de Monte de Marisco, or of a Raymond le Gros, frowning on them, if they quietly submitted to the tyrannic insults of a heated party. The military renown, too, of their Irish progenitors, might have concurred to rouse and urge them to the field. But I incline to think the motives of such people must have been to assert domestic security and independence, not by any means to set aside a great and good government, under which England, for which they must have felt affection, had so much flourished, and under which, also, Ireland might hope, when prejudice withered on the soil of illiberality, to become

completely happy. Such a people could have no relish for French rulers, and very little for an Irish Directory, formed on their model, and likely to be the obsequious slaves of sanguinary France!

Making our walk through Forth, we could not stop to investigate causes and effects in this point. It is not always prudent or delicate to ask questions which tend to former crimination. Facts speak sufficiently there. The men of Forth were injured, and they shewed the spirit of men; but, discovering their error in joining any tumultuous rising against his Majesty's government, they instantly returned to their homes, and as speedily as they could repaired their fault. Irish ardour, and English firmness, were thus seen acting, blended together, and no disgraceful excess marked the people of Forth.

To its high honor be it recorded, the Irish government ordered no severe or impolitic measures against them. Here was no massacre of Glencoe. The government, with paternal wisdom, seemed to know nothing of the short military excursion of the people of Forth. They resumed their agricultural pursuits, and are still, as we have just witnessed, an happy, independent, and unbroken race!—The extreme point of our walk through their little territory was Carne, ten or twelve miles from Wexford. This village we reached about the middle of the day.

It is seated on a hill, commanding a view of, and very near the ocean. It is quite a Welch village; the houses small and neat, the streets narrow, and the people of it themselves of small stature, with small, dark, piercing eyes, and neatly dressed. They were shy and distant in manner, as if unused to the world, and their accent was very peculiar indeed, without Irish brogue, and rather sharp and shrill. All their household utensils were bright and clean, and the smallest cottage white-washed and neat. The women followed knitting, and the men were chiefly fishermen. The church of Carne is extremely small, whitened and enclosed by a decent church-yard. It is just such as are seen so frequently in Wales. At Carne terminated our progress from Wexford through Forth.

We set forth on our return by something of a different line, and walked on a sandy shore, as the foaming waves thundered along it, to St. Margaret's, the mansion-house of Mr. Nunn, near the sea; rather a melancholy and solitary place! As none of the family were at home, we passed on, without making any delay, to Wexford.

We regretted we had not had time to call on the clergyman of Carne; but pedestrians have their disadvantages as well as advantages. Going through much bodily labour, and pressed for time, as it is peculiarly desirable for those to

return to their inn or lodging always before night, they cannot make every enquiry, or perhaps see all that is necessary. You, my dear L., will therefore make some allowance for our imperfect view of Forth, and give us credit for what we gleaned; it may induce you some time or other to inspect this early nest of your countrymen, and examine at leisure this wonderful phenomenon of a small colony incorporated with a populous country, but preserving a great deal of its own original manners, customs, and language. There appear there, what has not been accomplished in any other part, the symptoms of a judicious settlement of English in Ireland. The wise hand of Harvey de Monte Marisco, and the benevolent care of Fitzstephens, planted and fostered seeds which have flourished into good plants, and bearing wholesome fruit. It is much easier to improve a country thus, than has been imagined. It is but to begin well, and things go on right. Nature must not be rudely violated in attempting to colonize an inhabited country; but with all the ancient customs, manners, and institutions, which have long become part of herself, should rather be venerated and conciliated, and gently modelled by the hand of friendship;—never rudely cast away by the sword of the warrior, or arm of power. Forth is a signal monument that Ireland might have been better moulded. The first leaders of the English began rightly; the ba-

ronies of Forth and Bargies to this day prove it; they joined some of their countrymen by mild measures to the Irish of a certain district; they soon made alliances, and intermarried; the new comers became respected, and liked; and their acquirements and knowledge admired and followed. Force was not used, and no rankling feelings were engendered to endanger them, and make even improvements hateful.

Harvey de Monte Marisco, assisted by Fitzstephens, appears to have acted in these his estates in the very spirit of the good Duke of Normandy, Rollo. These nobles were of Norman extraction, and followed his noble example.

But a new order of things very soon took place in Ireland at large, after Henry the Second began to conceive its acquisition of importance. He grew jealous of all the great men who had done so much there for him at the first and critical period. Accordingly, under these impressions, a deputy came over to discountenance them and their plans. Similar governors succeeded Fitz-Andelm; avarice and prejudice swayed them. Ireland was constantly misrepresented to England. The barony of Forth, therefore, remains a solitary corner of unfinished improvement. We got late to Wexford, and I bid you hastily farewell.

LETTER XIV.

Tintern, July 5, 1812.

MY DEAR L.

We wished to see Enniscorthy, a considerable town within twelve or thirteen miles of Wexford, and resolved to make a sweeping round, in that line, to this village. It added to our fatigue, and, at the same time, to our information and pleasure. You urge me at one time or other to publish these letters; but who will be so indulgent to them as you, or, as you have expressed yourself, think me "well qualified to write on the affairs of Ireland?" —One valued and protecting friend was lost to me, by death, in 1806, whose candid mind, like your's, might have encouraged, and corrected them. But I shall continue them through this, and any future excursion, and leave the decision to time. That constitutional melancholy which haunts me, makes these walks agreeable and salutary; and the hope one day of humbly promoting the happiness of millions, and the welfare of our great empire, brightens the dark and mournful path Providence has willed me to follow.

I have mentioned to you, that Wexford is situated on the Slaney, which, near it, becomes a very noble river. On leaving it, for Enniscorthy, we proceeded half a mile, or more,

when we again approached the river, and had a very fine view of it and the castle of Carrig, at some distance. We soon reached it, and, crossing a wooden-bridge, stopped to examine this castle, whose situation is the most commanding and romantic you can conceive; the remains are not large, but the castle is situated on a lofty rock, and must once have been impregnable. It was built by Fitzstephens, as a place of security, and to be a check on Wexford. I am grieved to relate the story which belongs to it.

After a pacification made between Fitzstephens and the King of Leinster on one part, and Roderick O'Connor, Monarch of Ireland, on the other, Dermot departed to Dublin, to chastise that city, where his father had been murdered, and to advance his views, which were now becoming greatly extended. The people of Wexford besieged Fitzstephens in this castle immediately, but could make no impression on so strong a place, commanded by a man of so much courage and understanding. They had recourse to fraud. A deputation, asking a conference, assured him that Strongbow was killed; that Roderick had taken Dublin; that all Fitzstephens's countrymen were exterminated; and this they offered to confirm by solemn oaths. Fitzstephens hesitated, when they produced two bishops, in their robes, who solemnly affirmed that the whole was true. The gallant warrior

delivered up his castle, but was immediately made prisoner, and cast into chains!—his men insulted, tortured, and killed!—and himself, finally, conveyed to an island in the harbour, called Holy Island, with those of his soldiers who had survived the cruelties practised on them!—On hearing of the march of the victorious Britons, these treacherous people had retired there, after setting fire to Wexford. I would gladly believe this was the act of the Ostmen, or Danes of Wexford. There is a shameful mixture of fraud, perjury, and cruelty in it, which disgusts to a great degree.

Earl Strongbow had been arrived some time, so that the folly of the undertaking was as great as the guilt attending it. Probably a false report of the defeat of Strongbow induced the people of Wexford to commit this fraudulent and ungrateful action, which must ever be a disgrace to their annals. The perpetrators added to it the effrontery of an hypocritical message to Henry the Second, complaining against, and denouncing their prisoner. Fitzstephens was carried by them to Waterford; but, after some time, set at liberty by his sovereign, who well knew his great value, and soon learned his innocence of all the charges of cruelty and tyranny made against him.

The walk from Carrig castle, for nearly six miles on the road to Enniscorthy, is extremely

fine; the country resembles many beautifulparts of England. It is interspersed with handsome seats, on which is grown much timber, and the farming seems very respectable. The breaks of the Slaney, seen here and there, vary and beautify the landscape!—Since we left Dublin, we have met with nothing more charming.

As we arrived within two or three miles of Enniscorthy, new beauties presented themselves; and the Slaney glided beautifully along, between verdant meadows, groves, and handsome mansions. We found a very pleasant short way, along its banks, to Enniscorthy, through a copse wood, diversified with many simple charms. This is a handsome and large town, of from four to five thousand inhabitants; and the Slaney is there exquisitely beautiful. Certainly, from all I have seen of the rivers of Ireland, they seem to well merit the notice Spencer takes of them in his Fairy Queen. That poet's long residence in Ireland gave him full opportunity of knowing their great beauty.

As Ireland is mostly of a lime-stone and gravelly soil, and has little clay or chalk, the rivers glow with pellucid streams—blue as the heavens they reflect, and curling in white and pure foam over the rocks that impede them. Such a river is the Slaney at Enniscorthy, with which we had already become acquainted at Newtown Barry; but we thought it most beautiful at Enniscorthy.

of human nature, to be forced to say—that appetite increases the more it feeds.

Enniscorthy has some cotton manufactories, and is a place of considerable trade. There is an exceedingly large and handsome chapel building here, and a great Catholic population to attend it. The Irish people appear to great advantag eon Sunday-mornings, hastening to worship the Deity. Their zeal and sincerity cannot a moment be doubted. Simple, affectionate, and pious naturally, it does not occur to them as a thing to be occasionally excused, or omitted, that they should attend divine worship. You meet them in Sunday-morning walks, male and female, and of all ages, dressed in their best clothes, clean, and prepared for walking, by pinning up the cloak and gown, and throwing back the great coat. They go cheerfully and speedily, and are never then seen to loiter, which on other occasions they so much do. These observations have been often suggested on our peregrinations.

Finding nothing very interesting on our return to Tintern, we walked on rapidly, but did not, notwithstanding our exertions, reach it till late in the evening. The twinkling lights of the cottages in that charming little village were to us a very welcome sight. Our walk was above twenty miles.

Tintern, July 20, 1812.

We have now formed the plan—somewhat romantic, you may say, my dear L., but yet, I think, very rational,—to fix our abode for some time at the sea, eight miles from this, in one of the most solitary, yet noble situations imaginable. It is a long, narrow promontory, running into the extremity of St. George's channel, on which stands a light-house, and two very small hamlets, and is above two miles in length.—Great part of it is fertile and well cultivated, and a handsome seat of the Marquis of Ely's, now inhabited by Mr. Tottenham, his relative, to which is annexed a deer-park, that stands in the centre of it. Somewhat lower down, and in a farm-house near one of the hamlets, we propose to domesticate ourselves, and reside a few months. In no way shall we better be able to judge of a people, than by being thus among them. Besides, the solitude and grandeur of the place will be very pleasing, after having walked about two hundred miles and upwards on our tour. Rest is very sweet to pedestrians: we have books, among which is your favorite Æneid; and shall fish, and amuse ourselves pleasantly. We leave this to-morrow.—Believe me always, &c.

LETTER XV.

Church Town, Hook, Aug. 4, 1812.

MY DEAR L.

BEHOLD us removed here, and far removed from all the noise of the world, fixed for some time on the shore of the entrance of Waterford harbour. Our farm-house affords us very comfortable apartments, and the family supply us with milk, butter, fish, and potatoes, as also some garden vegetables, at a cheap rate. We bade farewell to Tintern with real regret. That peaceful and beautiful spot, abounding with picturesque views, and having a kind of charm in the very name, which is the "Lesser Tintern;" and thus allied, as it were, to the venerable and highly-admired Greater Tintern, in Monmouthshire, on the Wye, had won all our regards. Could we be insensible to its amiable clergyman and family's hospitality, and ever-pleasing conversation?—Could we forget how swiftly, and how advantageously time had passed over so many evenings, in their delightful villa?—Could we take leave of our humble hostess, and of the good cottagers of Tintern, and not be sorry? —However, we wished to enjoy the air and fine views of the ocean, and to have a more perfect seclusion. I wished to study Irish history;—

abstraction from the world, for that purpose, is necessary, at least if one wishes to do so with effect.

We have now spent a fortnight here, and are every day more pleased with so tranquil and truly rural an abode. The eastern side of the peninsula of Hook is extremely curious, and well deserves inspection. We spend whole days there, and have examined many wonderful caverns and vast ledges of black rock, curiously diversifying the tremendous front it presents to the sea. How awful in some of her forms is nature?—Deep gulphs, and perpendicular flat masses of the gloomy rock, here terrify, yet please; as, at times, below, on some low projecting point, the fisherman stands and throws his line to the waves, whilst their foam frequently swells round his knees. He pursues his labour undaunted; but so awfully dangerous is this shore, that melancholy accidents frequently have deprived Hook of some of its hardy youth. Woe to the ship which, when the storm drives her here, and the night is dark, touches these fatal rocks! Sometimes we see small row-boats, or fishing-smacks—sometimes small trading-sloops, pass near these stupendous and massy walls. They seem at our feet. We hear every voice, and see every gesture. We dread every moment their striking against the mighty masses which threaten them. Soon they steal gently

from us, and their white sails are lost in the distant horizon, as we gaze!

Our amiable and worthy friend, the Rev. Mr. Archdall, of Tintern, had pointed out and recommended to our notice the sublime and curious scenes on this shore. We found how correct was his taste; and, at a distance from him, his friendship still served us. Often in great caves, and awful grottos, rendered accessible when the tide is out, we find a natural bench of the dark rock, canopied by huge impending masses, while the sea, mildly illuminated by an evening sun, gently spreads, curls, and foams over the great ledges, which form an inclined plane from our grotto to it. There we bring the divine work of Virgil, and I read aloud to our little party for a long time in Pitt's translation, till the coming twilight darkens the sea and our grotto, when we retire to our farm-house, and to a simple but happy meal.

Thus frequently pass our evenings; and, at other times, we devote them to walking to the light-house of Hook, a mile distant, and having a commanding view from all sides of the ocean. It is placed on the extreme point of the promontory, and is very lofty. It appears to have for its basis the remains of an old castle. Of this castle an affecting story is handed down by tradition; I do not vouch for its truth. It is said to have in ancient times belonged to a

noble Irish lady, who resided here, and had two sons. When grown up to manhood, they went abroad, and continuing a long time, the mournful mother often looked to the sea from her castle for their coming, but in vain. At length, apprised of the joyful fact that they were on their way from foreign parts homeward, she made every preparation for their reception. In a dark and stormy night their vessel approached the fearful shores on the eastern side of Hook. No light in the castle appeared; nothing warned them of their danger. Need I relate the fatal catastrophe—they perished!—From that time, the disconsolate and widowed mother carefully preserved a light in her castle of Hook, on dark and dangerous nights, a memorial of her own lamentable loss, and a pious endeavour to preserve others, distressed at sea, from the cruel fate of her sons.

In modern times, a very good light-house has judiciously been erected. You cannot imagine any thing finer than its situation, which, if you cast your eyes on the map, you will perceive to be grand and commanding. Often, as we return from this in the evening, the long cry of the curlew, and the shrill one of the sea-snipe, strike us. We are amused too with the heavy diver, on some jutting rock, startled, and taking his low and unwilling flight. Samphire grows abundantly on some of these rocks, which forms so good a pickle,

and, for our evening occupation, we bring home quantities of it. We also visit Slade, our neighbouring hamlet, beautifully seated on a small harbour, where the fishing-boats of Hook find security. Here are salt-works, not now carried on, whether from want of capital, or some bickerings among proprietors, I know not. A small romantic castle joins the village, and almost touches the briny waves. How sweet is an evening sometimes here! The good people quietly employed, some at their boats, others at household or garden occupation; the "playful chil-"dren, just let loose from school;" the placid surface of an undisturbed ocean, glowing with the last refulgence of the sun.—What a picture!

The fishing for hake, cod, mackarel, ling, seacarp, and herrings, in their seasons, attract a great number of Munster and Leinster boats, at times, here. Traul-boats come in now and then; they are said to injure the other fisheries.

On our return from these evening walks, the family at our farm-house always receive us in the most cheerful and pleasant manner. They are correctly well-behaved, orderly, and regular. Our hostess is a venerable old woman, nearly eighty, possessing a sound and masculine understanding. She had been the mother of a hero, and seemed worthy to have produced one. Mrs. King's eldest son had an early inclination for the sea, and was

well qualified to prove an honor and support to the British navy. Large and robust, and of extraordinary strength, he was quite unacquainted with fear, and found in the sea his proper element. On board his Majesty's navy he accordingly long served with great honor to himself. In every action he was foremost and undaunted. In one, near Guadaloupe, where Sir George Rodney commanded, the colours of young King's ship were shot down. The battle was warmly contested on both sides. As the cannon thundered, the cries of wounded and dying were heard, and the waves dashed round him. King snatched the colours, and resolutely nailed them to the stump of the mast! The French fired repeatedly at him, while thus occupied, but this naval hero calmly continued, and accomplished his work: Confidence revived in the shattered vessel: King was cheered: soon were the Britons victorious!

After this tremendous conflict, King went to look among the numerous dead for his own particular messmates. He perceived with joy that all had escaped; shewing as much of an affectionate heart after the engagement, as he had done of a brave one before it. This is peculiar to the Irish character. Sir George Rodney made the brave fellow his boatswain. Many extraordinary facts are related in the family of his courage and enterprize; but he is no more! His

mother is proud of his memory. Her sentiments are exalted and noble, though she dwells in a modest cottage. We often converse with her with pleasure and satisfaction.

She lost at sea three other fine young men, and a few years ago, one who resided with her died suddenly. One remains, living near her, and she has two daughters. Her husband has been dead some time. To survive five sons, and they among the finest young men in the country, was trying! Mrs. King bears all this with admirable resignation; but, I think, would be pleased if Heaven called her away. She never entirely recovered the loss of her eldest son. I sometimes observe this venerable and respectable matron on her knees at night, in their rustic kitchen, when all is silent, and a glimmering lamp scarcely shews her aged figure and pale cheeks, her hands and eyes raised to God, and the tear wetting her furrowed face! her clear and audible voice penetrates the very soul; it trembles only when the memory of the departed occurs, and she prays for their eternal repose. It is a solemn and affecting scene!

The habits of the family are peaceful and industrious; the daughters spin wool, sew, and take care of their mother and the house. Mrs. King's son-in-law, who manages the farm she holds, prepares in the evening for the morrow's labour; no noise ever disturbs us. In the

evenings, some neighbouring lads come in and join the family at their kitchen fire-side; then they begin to relate stories, of which all are passionately fond, and this they will prolong to a late hour. Mrs. King, in her old straw-made arm-chair, presides with quiet dignity, and sometimes intermingles her own sensible and keen observations, and always restrains the party from any tumultuous mirth, lest we should be annoyed in our apartment.

It was exceedingly pleasing to find in our old hostess the justest sentiments as to the unhappy insurrection in 1798. She appreciated the blessings bestowed by a good and powerful government very correctly; and I recollect a late strong expression of hers, in speaking of the rebels: she said, "if they had got the better for "a little, they would soon have betrayed one "another. But what fools, or worse, to bring "destruction on themselves and so many inno-"cent creatures!" On one occasion, some years ago, I am informed, she fully sustained in practice the decision and fortitude she shewed herself in conversation to be possessed of. In returning from Waterford to Duncannon-fort, by sea, a storm arose; the sailors of the market-boat were alarmed, and the passengers huddled together in the greatest terror. The gale increasing, Mrs. King alone preserved her courage and presence of mind, pointed out to the sailors the right mea-

sures, what sails to pull down, and how to steer. Her voice and gesture,—in a word, her courage re-animated the men! The boat got safely to Duncannon, and Mrs. King walked quietly home.

Such was our venerable friend, for so we soon considered her; and ever at the close of our evening's walk did she receive us kindly, and took constant care that our fire burnt pleasantly; that our tea-things were laid, and our kettle ready.

Believe me, &c.

LETTER XVI.

Church Town, Hook, August 15, 1812.

MY DEAR L.

After residing here some time, we find the situation so pleasant and healthful, that we shall remain till the cold autumnal blast warns us to terminate our tour and my historical studies, and bid farewell to these worthy people and Wexford,—perhaps for ever!

We have, with the assistance of Mrs. King's son, and her family, erected a tent on the shore, in a small green field, not six minutes walk from our farm-house. This completes our satisfaction. There we breakfast, dine, and generally

drink tea. Constantly, as the golden dawn kindles along the waves, and illuminates the opposite shore and mountainous hills, I repair to this tent, and our party always join me with breakfast.

What beneficence, my dear L., has not the Creator shewn in his wonderful and ever-delightful plan of this globe's rotary and annual motion! By the latter, he gives to us, inhabiting these climates, the pleasing changes of spring, summer, autumn, and winter. By the former, he secures for us, if we avail ourselves of his goodness, of the ever-lovely charms of silent morn, and reposing eve! The morning, in its earliest dawn, seems the renovation of the existence of man,—and of all things,—and a pledge of another more glorious, and an immortal dawn!—What a tribute of joy every little bird pours forth!—How do the young cattle frolic!—How freshly flows every river and stream!—And how beautifully swells and ripples the sea, floating in gilded majesty to the shore!—Then, too, the mind of man, refreshed and invigorated, as well as charmed, by this picture of sweet and virgin beauty, which heaven lights up for him, blooms and flourishes in the midst of animated nature.

One of our party has become a very good fisher, from the stupendous rocks on the east-side, and sallies out frequently before dawn with the large long rod and strong line they use here. He relates to me an extraordinary and interesting

piece of natural history, with which he became acquainted yesterday morning. He set out to fish while twilight was going, and he scarcely discerned his path. Arrived at the rocks, he waited farther light, as he had come out so early. In some time, the sun peeped from the waves! This mighty orb began faintly to redden the sleeping waves, when suddenly a vast play of fish, not far distant from shore, startled and delighted our fisherman. There was instantaneously an innumerable concourse in motion, beating the surface of the water, playing their gambols, their silvery sides glistening in the rays of the dawn! The sun slowly emerged from his bed, and when he was a few moments risen, this "play" (as it is termed by sea-faring people) suddenly ceased. This singular mark of adoration to Heaven, paid by animated and reviving nature, when dawn appears, is not commonly known, unless to very early risers, who frequent or fish on solitary rocky shores like those of Hook. I regret greatly that I never witnessed this peculiar and pleasing phenomenon. It may occur but rarely.

In our tent, I am now able to prosecute those studies I wished for some time to apply to. The indefatigable and impartial Ware,—the upright and sensible Leland,—Smith's History of Waterford, and some other works on Ireland,—Hume, the prince of English historians, enlightened, and full of knowledge.—The Æneid, Iliad, and

Odyssey, those productions of the most divine of all bards (in translations for evening reading), and a small volume of Petrarca, in his original language, form the little library of the tent. We never move our chairs or table, and rarely our books; and, with the earliest dawn, I find them always untouched. The sailors land for water frequently, from strange boats, but we never lose any thing. This shews much honesty; and besides, the Irish, unvitiated by towns, or party madness, as we see them in these remote parts, among many good traits, have a great respect for any thing of what they term "scholarship." My studies, therefore, proceed pleasantly and unmolested in our tent. In such situations and occupations the mind grows more in a few months than elsewhere in years. It puts forth vigorous shoots on all sides; it has its proper cultivation, and abundant and unpolluted air; it soon towers and spreads.

As Henry the Second passed the very shore where our tent stands, on his way to Waterford, I think I shall send you some observations, not yet matured, on that monarch's policy in Ireland, before we leave the Hook. How often do we imagine his numerous and pompous fleet passing to Waterford, as we sit in the evenings in this tent! What gallant warriors crowd the deck! Does not that seem the King, of majestic

air, anxiously exploring these unknown coasts? What ships! What cries! What animation! Yet, my dear L., where are all their projects of ambition now? The monarch, and the humblest soldier, alike are dust! The gaudy dream is ended, and Henry can live on earth but in the memory of his benefits!

I forgot to mention, that yesterday produced an event of some importance in our farm-house, and this day another. The latter has been also productive of agreeable consequences to us, for it has procured a sensible and valuable acquaintance.

Yesterday Mrs. King's eldest daughter presented her with a grandchild,—to-day it was christened; and to-day we have seen the Rev. Mr. O'Flaherty. It was necessary for our good people to send for their respectable priest to christen this young addition to our rural society. Let not your noble and fashionable friends in England or in this country be startled, if they see this letter, at my introducing into the picture of life at Hook, a catholic priest of Ireland! Humane, generous, and perfectly well-educated; having the true polish of a gentleman, blended with the humility of a christian pastor, he has afforded us a most agreeable specimen of the Irish character in some of its best points of view. The ceremony of the christening over, he was kind enough to visit our tent, to offer me some

French books, and to all the party every civility in his power. He resides about two miles and a half from this, and has invited us to breakfast tomorrow.

We now frequently turn our evening walks towards Loftus' Hall. It stands immediately on the sea, and its beautiful shores command the finest views of the Waterford coast, and the bay stretching up to Duncannon fort. Mr. Tottenham called once at our cottage; but we have not yet seen him. He is said to be a fine old gentleman, and not severe on this tenantry of Lord Ely's, for whom he acts—a thing to be admired and applauded, in Ireland, wherever it is met.

But after a short walk, the remainder of our evenings are now regularly devoted to the Iliad of Homer, translated by Mr. Pope, and which we read aloud alternately. The Æneid we have finished.

The scenery here is very suitable to such a poem; and, from its repeated recurrence to, and description of the sea, it is very probable that that noblest of bards composed his work in a similar situation. He is thought to have been an Ionian Greek, and perhaps lived near the shore. How much superior is this scene, for the full enjoyment and comprehension of the endless and sublime beauties of his masterly work, to the melancholy inspiring walls of dull colleges,—or the splendid apartments

of wealth and insipid fashion? In the midst of these simple children of nature we are never disturbed by the least rudeness, or a loud voice near our tent. Frequently are we all so enraptured with the story of the Grecian genius, that we have candles brought to the tent on very calm evenings, and prolong our readings to ten or eleven o'clock. We catch his enthusiasm, and are hurried irresistibly on. His object—to teach concord to Grecian states and kings was a fine one, and how inimitably has he executed his plan! What can surpass the speeches of the jarring chiefs at the commencement?—the march of Chaleas along the shore?—How much has he conveyed in the original by "Βη δ'αιτων παρα θινα "πολαφλοις Βοιο θαλασσης;"—the silent walk of Chaleas —but I stay my pen. To enumerate his sublime passages, his beauties, and various skilful modes of instructing mankind, were, perhaps, impossible, at least it would require volumes! You must, therefore, take up the work in your own delightful rural residence, and, in the bosom of a happy and accomplished family, read the immortal bard's verses, as we have done, aloud, and accompany us from time to time in our progress, which is considerable, (as we read one or two, and sometimes three books of the Iliad, every evening.) At present, on one of the loveliest evenings I ever beheld—the sea placid, and rich with the golden

glow of a declining sun, and small sail-boats gliding along near us,—we are commencing the fourth book; and I have only time to say, how truly, I am, &c.

LETTER XVII.

Church Town, Hook, August 20, 1812.

MY DEAR L.

THIS morning we breakfasted with Mr. O'Flaherty. He resides in a very pretty country-house, with an amiable old lady and her niece, his relatives and friends. The walk to Little Grange, the name of their place, is cheerful and pleasant, and on emerging from our peninsula (that lonely world in itself,) of Hook, we ascended nearly all the way very gradually, and had some very fine views of the sea, of Waterford harbour, St. George's channel, and, on the extreme point of the peninsula, of the distant tower of Hook. The rich colours of the ripening harvest painted the tranquil face of a happy country. The wild poppy, so happily styled in the Hon. Mrs. O'Neil's charming ode—a "brilliant weed," was sprinkled on the ditches and through the fields. Not melancholy, as the admirable authoress when she wrote one of the sweetest odes extant: we both—

"For the promise of the labour'd field,"
And "for the good the yellow harvests yield,
"Bent at Ceres' shrine,"
And "gaily hail'd the goddess for her scarlet flower."

On our way to Mr. O'Flaherty's, the poppy shewed itself quite splendidly The wild scabious, with its tender blue, also, was every where around us. I am a most indifferent botanist, but love the science. I have not in this tour attempted to give you difficult names, which I imperfectly understand; but I know a good and enlightened friend, who may be induced to send me a sketch on the plants of Ireland; and, if he gratifies me, I shall send you a copy. Botany sprinkles perpetual charms on the pedestrian's path; he learns to admire the hidden beauties of plants, and the ineffable wisdom of the Creator, with never-cloyed raptures. I regret that I do not know this charming science better.

Mr. O'Flaherty received us with great cordiality at his door, and conducted us to a genteel apartment, where a plentiful and elegant breakfast of the best tea, coffee, and rolls, we had for a long time tasted, awaited us, laid on a snowy cloth, and served with handsome china. But the modest and pleasing ladies of the house, added to our benevolent entertainer's very spirited and liberal conversation, gave it no small charm. The house commands a good view of the country and Featherd; and Mr. O'Flaherty promises

to introduce us to the Rev. Mr. Kennedy, rector of that place, an excellent man, clergyman, and magistrate, who has already shewn us some civility.

We left this happy mansion with regret; and afterwards prolonged our walk to Tintern. With new pleasure we re-visited every spot, our late humble abode, and our ever-valued friend Mr. Archdall. We surveyed the Abbey with fresh interest, and some of us began even to prefer it to Tintern, in Monmouthshire. We said, though not so grand, it was more picturesque; that the appearance of the latter was spoiled by ruined cottages huddled round it, and that the Wye, when the tide fell, was muddy and disagreable below the Abbey; that the vale of the Lesser Tintern, if improved, would equal any thing whatever in Wales; and that the contiguity of an arm of the sea, stretching near it, and joining its beautiful little stream, gave it advantages, in point of varied and exquisite views, far beyond those of Tintern, in Monmouthshire!—One day, perhaps, my dear L., you and Mrs. L. may inspect these rival beauties of Ireland and Wales, and help us to decide this friendly dispute on the picturesque of the two Tinterns. I must acknowledge I think there is a natural partiality on one side to the Irish Tintern, and that the Tintern of Wales is almost unrivalled in the empire:—certainly, however, the Wexford Tintern

forms one of the most picturesquely beautiful places you can imagine.

Our argument on the two abbeys of Tintern nearly carried us home; and, as usual, our evening was devoted to the Grecian bard.

Church Town, Hook, Sept. 1, 1812.

Since I last wrote we have been often at Mr. O'Flaherty's house, and always hospitably and pleasantly received. The following little anecdote will raise your opinions of him, as it did mine. It will also throw some light on the situation of Ireland.

Wexford has been, in every respect, quite tranquil since the rebellion; and no part of it more so than this neighbourhood. Some short time ago a house, belonging to a farm lately taken, was set on fire and burnt. This happened in our friend's parish. It made a great sensation, and every gentleman and respectable person around, anxiously wished to stop and punish so pernicious a practice. Mr. O'Flaherty was also much concerned, and took every pains to detect the incendiaries. They were not discovered, however, and it was supposed they might have come from Munster to introduce this nefarious system. There was thence a greater hope of checking it by vigilance and determination. The exertions of the gentry had an excellent effect, and no more houses were burned.

At this period a threatening notice appeared posted upon Mr. O'Flaherty's chapel-door, denouncing severe vengeance against all enemies of the people. A large concourse had assembled when he arrived to officiate at divine service. He saw and read the paper, and calmly took it down and tore it in pieces. A loud murmur was heard. —"My friends," said Mr. O'Flaherty, "I would "have done so if ten or twelve swords had been "pointed at my breast! This country shall not "be disgraced and disturbed by any ruinous, "nightly, or other unlawful practices!"

The crowd was silent and abashed, and Mr. O'Flaherty did not neglect to enforce his sentiments in the discourse of the day. No outrage whatever has since occurred, and the whole country has remained peaceable as before.

We shall soon, my dear L., I believe, bid adieu to these rural scenes. The autumn fast advances. They are reaping busily on all sides of our tent; and the numerous fleet of fishing-boats, which often lie in full view between us and the Waterford coast, will soon take their departure.

The cold breeze begins to render our hitherto delightful little daily abode on the shore, uncomfortable. Our readings in Homer cannot be prolonged to so late an hour, and we are glad to adjourn to our own apartment pretty early, where a cheerful fire is ready to warm us. My studies

in history draw to a close; and I shall to-morrow morning, if the weather prove fine, sketch out some thoughts on the undertaking and policy of Henry the Second, in regard to Ireland:—I say if the weather prove fine, because the habit of studying and writing on such subjects, has become so established a theory, that I could not, with half the satisfaction or ease, perform my promise to you in any other spot than our beloved tent.

Church Town, Hook, Sept. 2, 1812.

The morning is quite charming, and full of that melancholy interest which the autumnal season gives at such moments, as well as in the evenings. The cool and searching air inspires deep thoughts of the decay of all things. It tells that summer's bloom and joys are gone, and man startles as if he found himself approaching a precipice—when he thinks that he too must fall!—Spring, reviving all the vegetable world, may find him no more! What a mournful eloquence, sometimes, in nature's most silent operations!

The fields around this spot are stripped of their late rich harvest. The fishing-boats have retired, dreading the coming storms of winter. A clear blue sky, and a few distant clouds resting on the horizon, streaked with reddish gold, shew a tendency to frost. Here and there a vessel is passing silently on in full sail. I am placed on the bank

of that arm of the sea which leads to Waterford; how beautiful the opposite shore, just lighted by the morning sun!

Early in the autumn of 1171, Raymond le Gros, the renowned and valiant general of the English, passed this way, accompanied by Harvey de Monte Marisco (who had revisited England), and a small band of seventy men. In a short period followed Strongbow, Earl of Chepstow, with a gallant train of twelve hundred; and, in the autumn of the following year, 1172, Henry the Second, Monarch of England and of part of France, sailed past here with a valiant army of from four to five thousand men, and a brilliant train of nobles.

If you throw your eyes over Tacitus "de Moribus Germanorum," you will find it give a strong idea of the measures of the Irish nation, in many respects, at and before this period. Their government itself seems never to have been placed on a right basis. The aborigines, and early invaders, always divided it into petty dynasties. Hereman and Heber, sons of Mileius, transmitted to their posterity a pentarchal one. Hugony established twenty-five dynasties. Odlam Fodla had legislative talents, but the soil was uncongenial to his labours. Conn, Cormack O'Conn, and his son, shewed great abilities; but two of these were murdered, and they were unable to leave lasting institutions in their states.

The genius of the Irish did not turn to make or permit permanent ones. The splendour of a day, the gratification of evanescent vanity, and the too intemperate pursuit of revenge, satisfied them; but estranged them from real advancement in glory, and in the true science of government. They wished to be great, at a small expence of labour, time, and self-denial. Such institutions as those of Lycurgus, or Romulus, or Alfred, were never imagined by these inconsiderate and haughty islanders. Constant divisions and internal weakness naturally rewarded their ignorant presumption. Before the Christian era, the twenty-five dynasties of Hugony had again, nominally at least, merged into a pentarchy. The chief monarch was elective, and the inferior monarchs sometimes hereditary—sometimes elective, as the peculiarity of the law permitted. The latter paid a very uncertain tribute in kind to the chief monarch, which they sent when they pleased.

The assembly at Tarah was a meeting of numerous petty despots and bards. We find nothing done there to meliorate the condition of the long-afflicted people. The bards ministered to these tyrants' pride. They regulated genealogies, and taught congregated princes and nobles to fancy valour, wisdom, and virtue hereditary, whilst many of them were the most worthless of mankind. Their numbers and rapa-

city made these bards, at length, quite intolerable, even to their patrons.

The ministers of Christianity did a great deal to meliorate the country. They raised up the prostrate people, and restrained the selfish despots, who had long trampled them on their native soil, or made them unhappy instruments of blood and rapine. Patrick did much good; and this venerable bishop appears to have joined the talents of the legislator with those of the Apostle of Christ. In time, as there was no other eligible profession for men of literature and talent, the Christian clergy became rather numerous, and the religious houses in Ireland too many for so small a country. But the latter were the only depositories of learning; and, as a bright lustre shone from many of them, should be viewed with respect. However, notwithstanding the efforts of the Christian clergy to better the condition of the people of Ireland, and raise them from their degraded situation, they could do nothing to rectify a form of government essentially bad. The Danes, in the mean time, began to invade and ravage Ireland. Under Turgesius they exercised the powers of the sole monarchy. Though checked, they did not abandon their hold. They possessed several maritime little kingdoms in the east, south, and west. Afflicted by the double grievance of the tyranny of their

own numerous despots, and of Danish rapacity and oppression, Ireland saw Henry the Second of England approach as a deliverer and friend. He landed at Waterford without opposition. That city, chiefly inhabited by Danes, and one of their establishments, had been taken by Strongbow. Previous to the King of England's arrival, some of the Irish, of Dublin and Leinster, had applied to the King of Man and the northern Princes for aid against the English; so that Lord Lyttleton's opinion seems a very probable one, that they would have fallen totally under the yoke of Norwegians and Danes, if that plan had succeeded. Revenge had blinded them; and, as usual, the passions of the moment reigned instead of sound policy and amicable adjustment.

If the English and Henry the Second had never approached the shores of Ireland, she might, perhaps, have become subject to other states of the Continent than the Norwegian and Danish ones, to which, from her western situation, she lies exposed. The construction of her internal policy was such as to ensure success to any bold and united adventurers, supported by a powerful parent state.

Henry came as the ally and protector of the King of Leinster, and the enemy of the despotism of Roderick O'Connor. Almost imme-

diately on his landing, the petty kings began to tender their submission to him. The defective old machinery, of above a thousand years infirm existence, fell to pieces on this great monarch's appearance. Had the system of government in Ireland possessed one particle of good, some respectable resistance would have been made to Henry at Waterford. No feeling of public good animated this unhappy country. Its virtuous clergy had long seen and vainly lamented the feuds, assassinations, and predatory warfare of her infatuated kings and chieftains, as well as the violence of the perfidious and ferocious Danes—the enemies to religion and good order; and looked with a very favorable eye on Henry the Second, as the only corrector of all these intolerable grievances. That king had only to pause, and decide on good and wise measures; to remain a sufficient time in the country to give a lasting impulse; and to leave behind him men of understanding, valour, and temper, at the head of affairs. The fate of future millions in Ireland, and much of the future comfort and security also of England, depended on this great monarch's decision.

Breakfast appears—they are bringing it to the tent, so that I am obliged to postpone our historical enquiry till to-morrow morning. I shall, therefore, say no more than how sincerely I am, &c. &c.

LETTER XVIII.

Church Town, Hook, Sept. 20, 1812.

MY DEAR L.

SINCE my last, we have far advanced in our readings of the Iliad. We recur to that immortal work with renewed pleasure every evening, and hope to finish it before we leave this. Never shall we have a more favorable opportunity for enjoying its surprising excellence. What matchless paintings from nature! What true pathetic in all the domestic scenes! What terrible energy in the violent and sublime ones! All the relations of human life, how sweetly pourtrayed and delineated! Do we not see and hear the angry Achilles weeping on the shore! his affectionate mother arise, console her son, and repair to the celestial regions! What fraternal affection between Agamemnon and Menelaus! What tenderness and fidelity in Hector and Andromache! The Trojan hero is the finest example of the purest patriotism: he defends a beloved and endangered country, though he does not approve or palliate the errors of a faulty brother: when it is thus endangered, he does not dispute, but act. He continues, throughout the whole work, to repel the foreign invader, even when death impends with too fatal certainty! What a noble speech of Achilles' is that where he rejects the

proffered reconciliation of the King! What vigorous disdain of an injurious tyrant! But, when roused and reconciled, through the means of the death of Patrocles, what a torrent of living indignation and fury does he then become! and how soul-touching is the appearance of the ghost of his friend! his mournful speech, and his flitting away with the morning's dawn! The celestial machinery,—the appearance, conflicts, and movements of the gods,—how beautifully intermingled,—how truly sublime,—how profoundly contrived to animate and work the poem, and convey great and admirable truths!

How amazingly well does this great master paint the manners of the time! The shield of Achilles, how rich! The figures of former days seem re-animated by the magic bard, and move before our eyes! What divinity of characters among the Greeks and Trojans!—The haughty Agamemnon sustains, under great difficulties, the dignity of a sovereign and commander-in-chief, and has many fine qualities, though obscured by pride.—His brother shews mildness and quiet valour.—Ulysses, eloquent and artful, deeply skilled in human nature.—Diomede, generous, brave, and impetuous.—Ajax, magnanimous, simple, and of heroic courage, as a soldier, —Achilles you know too well for me to add a word, —all, how well imagined!—Thersites seems to me an inimitable picture of a cowardly mob;

malignant, revengeful, and mean, though sanguinary. The prayers and sacrifices mark a just reverence for religion, and are never omitted.—The Grecian soldiers, as well as Trojan, are pious and warlike.

On the other side, in Troy, Priam is a venerable king, affording an affecting picture of royalty in distress, though not through its own misconduct.—Hector I have mentioned.—Paris displays all the weakness and selfishness of a vain and voluptuous character.—Æneas is a brave warrior, full of piety and good sense.—The rest of the Trojan princes and warriors are all respectable.—Helen is made so beautifully interesting by the bard, through her self-reproaches and remorse, and her sincere admiration of Hector's amiable and great character, that we forget her faults.—Andromache presents the most enchanting traits of conjugal and maternal tenderness. Oh! my dear L., at that passage where Hector says——

"But come it will, the day decreed by fate;"

who can avoid deeply sympathizing, that bears the form of man, and has ever felt any of the foreboding fears the Trojan prince there expresses? The sentiments, too, of Homer are so full of wisdom and justice,—they appeal so unerringly to the heart and understanding, that no one can read or hear his works without instruc-

tion and delight. His descriptions are quite beyond my praise, for it is absolutely Nature herself we have presented to us. I was forgetting, in enumerating some characters, the matron queen, and affectionate mother, in Hecuba. Her patriot feelings about Hector give her prodigious dignity and interest.

Thus have I run on, my dear L., though we have not entirely finished the Iliad, our evening undertaking. You will join me in this admiration, for a soul so poetic as your's well appreciates Homer: and who is so deserving of praise as this great instructor of mankind;—an epic poet, who has raised a monument to his country's glory, more imperishable than the proudest works of Egypt, or all the other works of man? I am so presumptuous as to differ from the accomplished Longinus, and to think the Odyssey of the Grecian poet not inferior to the Iliad, or manifesting decline of genius, or old age in the author.

The Odyssey is a poem of a different species of the epic, has a different object, and is full of rural and domestic pictures of life. We have no longer the sanguinary battles of the Iliad; and many do not lament this loss; but we have a noble lesson on the internal economy of a state; the ruin that follows the absence of one good being, and the want of his councils and energetic arm; the confusion arising from many pretenders to a throne, and the certain invitation

such wretchedness affords to every rapacious invader; in a word, such a lesson as Ireland wanted for ages; to whose history I return.

Church Town, Hook.

Again the morning favors, and again I behold the opposite shores of Waterford and the sea, now somewhat curled and agitated by the cool autumnal blast: the dawn is becoming less splendid every morning; a pale yellow spreads over scenes so lately glowing with the red blush of summer. Yet still are these scenes,—solitary and silent as they are,—often beautiful, and often sublime. The benevolent Creator is but changing the picture of nature, for wise purposes, leading us to contemplation, and to a melancholy, not unuseful, instead of the gayer enjoyments which summer, decked with laughing beauties, lately gave. Still do they recall the memory of Henry the Second, as he sailed along. It was at this very period of the year he arrived.

Henry did not remain long at Waterford. He received there the submission of the King of Desmond and Cork, and then visited Lismore, where he ordered a fort to be built, and held a conference with the Archbishop of Cashel, of a friendly and conciliating nature. The King of Limerick soon after submitted; and, in a short time, all the petty kings and chiefs of Munster acknowledged Henry.

The monarch having thus seen the south of Ireland yield to him without a struggle, took some steps to secure the cities of Waterford, Cork, Limerick, and other places, and resolved to march to Dublin. He previously liberated the noble Fitzstephens from unmerited imprisonment, and dismissed the complaints of his perfidious and base enemies. He could not be insensible to such heroic worth; and it had ill become the King of England to let the hero, who may be said to have acquired this island for him, languish in chains. But I fear he did not afterwards protect Fitzstephens as he ought to have done. The memory of benefits is odious to princes, and they too often contumaciously abandon to danger those who, for their advantage, draw down lasting enmity on themselves!

Henry proceeded through Leinster, and, as Strongbow, by many cruelties, had made himself odious, was there received with universal joy, every one preferring obedience to the monarch himself. A pregnant lesson this for his future course! He held a stately and easy progress through this province. Whether he sojourned in the fine countries of Kilkenny and Wexford, which we have just seen, or passed through the romantic and beautiful Wicklow, not a peasant molested his army, or its stragglers. Wearied with ages of endless oppression under the ferocious tyranny of kinglings, which permitted no

security of property, life, or liberty, the British monarch and his warriors seemed to give them a prospect of a favorable change. The arm of petty despotism, the worst grievance that degrades and afflicts human nature, was about to be arrested; and the hideous monster, with its many mouths, devouring the life-blood of the people, was about to be laid prostrate!

Henry's march was, as it ought to have been, a friendly progress through a country the natural ally of England. No cruelty stained it,—no violations of female honor,—no disgraceful thirst of plunder,—nothing of those practices which have dishonored the armies of a modern usurper, —occurred. Henry was one of those benefactors of mankind who disdain the coarse resources of the mob, or a successful leader of it. He accordingly arrived in Dublin undisturbed, and in safety, and there prepared to keep his Christmas. He reposed with cheerfulness, and as a father in the bosom of his new people.

Roderick O'Connor in the mean time, the feeble and despotic head of the Pontarchal hydra, pusillanimously encamped within the Shannon, making that noble river his safeguard, and the witness of his disgrace. Ulster remained perfectly tranquil, and neither aided the nominal monarch of Ireland, nor in any manner disturbed Henry. What Fitzstephens and Strongbow had begun, it was for that great king now to com-

plete. The pacification and civilization of the island were in his hands. Already in a southern part of this county, the pleasing work was begun by his gallant captains; he had but to continue it on a larger scale. The people hailed him as a deliverer from their despots,—from the Danes. They supported neither, as is ever the case in an oppressed country, and they were right; the people at large had no interest in common with them: a good government was their want, and they valued not the last agonies of kingly pride in every province. They desired the *reality* of prosperity, not the illusive name, sounded forth by vanity, though condemned by reason.

Henry, with equal policy and generosity, entertained all the Irish kings and lords who attended his court at Dublin, in a sumptuous manner; and thus, by proper attention and kindness, conciliated the minds of men. A synod of the clergy was held, in his name, at Cashel. He was acknowledged there with gratitude; for, as the prelates justly expressed themselves, "To "him were the church and realm of Ireland in-"debted for whatever they have hitherto ob-"tained, either of the benefits of peace, or the "increase of religion."

It is to be regretted, that Henry did not early in the spring make a progress to Ulster, and thence descend to the western side of the island.

The submission of the northern chiefs would have caused Roderick to lay down his nominal sceptre, and the brave and ingenuous people of Connaught would have been released from their painful yoke for ever. It is said a council was held at Lismore, by Henry's commands, and the laws of England accepted and sworn to; but the testimony seems vague and weak. How, in fact, could these laws be tendered to, or be said to have been accepted with any degree of common sense, by a country not half investigated or brought to allegiance, under the British government? The soil must be prepared before the seed be sown, and much of Henry's cares were necessary to make it ready. He is said to have divided the districts that submitted to him into shires, and to have appointed sheriffs, and itinerant judges. This I scarcely credit, and it was at best but a nugatory step. New institutions must be imparted gradually to a people, and their minds prepared, before the law-giver introduce them. Besides, it is a contradiction to this, that Henry gave up the whole dominion of Ulster to John de Courcy, previous to his departure, and adopted the crude idea of conquest.

He granted charters to Waterford and Dublin, affording the benefit of English laws, but this favor to two cities proved a narrow view of things. In Dublin he established a regular form

of government, by a deputy, and other great officers of state; courts of law, and all appendages of English government, and English law.

But Henry was devoured by many other cares, and had passed an anxious winter in Ireland. He had allowed his temper to master him in the affair of Becket, whom he had oppressed, and whom some violent adherents had assassinated. This quarrel with the Church proved now most detrimental to the real interests of England, and to the empire; and most fatal to that happiness and just independence this monarch came to bestow on Ireland. Domestic uneasiness added much to his painful situation. He was threatened, on one side, by the sentence of excommunication against his dominions, (an awful weapon in those days!) and by the treasonable practices of his queen and sons on the other. Couriers announced to him at Wexford the most alarming intelligence; and he prepared speedily to embark for Wales. Thus interrupted, he acted more impoliticly than it is fairly to be presumed he would have done under other circumstances; but, I am concerned to say, with a narrowness of mind,—a jealousy of his first captains, and a disregard of the rights of the Irish, unworthy a great man, and legislator.

He endeavoured to detach the English adventurers, by large grants of land, from the Earl of Chepstow. To Fitzstephens, in lieu of the hard-

earned possessions in Wexford the ungrateful king had taken from him, he granted a district near Dublin. To other great men, amongst the English, he made vast gifts of territory. To De Lacy, Meath, and to John de Courcy, the entire province of Ulster, to be won by force of arms. He imitated William the Conqueror,—not Rollo, Duke of Normandy. He renewed, under another form, the many-headed despotism of great leaders, not quite unqualified or unrestrained, but endowed with power and territory totally inimical to good government, and to the improvement of Ireland. He acted for the day, when his mind should have embraced centuries; and he followed the suggestions of mercenary courtiers, when he should have consulted parliaments in England and Ireland.

Henry embarked at Wexford on the feast of Easter, 1173, and landing in Pembrokeshire, hastened to his dominions in France, for the preservation of which he unwisely disregarded Ireland, and became subservient to haughty cardinals, whom he should have had boldness enough to despise! From that unfortunate hour to this, a defective system has continued to blight all the fair hopes of making the empire strong through Ireland's strength, and this unhappy island prosperous and happy through its junction with England. Henry left her the worst of feudal systems,—great chieftains, distant from the lord-paramount,

—and vassals, whose complaints were never heard, or whose representations were transmitted back to their oppressors to decide on. He neither fully conciliated nor conquered the country. He did not dare to be just to the people, lest he might offend great men; and, not imitating the conduct of Solon, by giving them the best laws they were capable of, he left them without any; and, for a petty squabble with churchmen, he for ever abandoned and neglected the finest opportunity any English monarch could have had of consolidating his great empire, and of being, what every English sovereign ought to be,—*the impartial protector and tender parent of the Irish nation.* How my hand trembles! How my heart bleeds! at the long train of miseries which succeeded.

Here I conclude my historical sketch on Henry's coming to Ireland. Pardon its imperfections, and believe me always,

Yours, &c.

LETTER XIX.

Portet's Gate, Oct. 6, 1812.

MY DEAR L.

How pleasant are these autumnal mornings still! But September has expired, and the days grow so cold and severe on the peninsula, which is penetrated thoroughly by the sea-breeze, that we have removed for a short time to another and more commodious and comfortable abode; the tent has disappeared; the historical studies are closed; and the divine Iliad is nearly terminated. In another week we shall leave Wexford. We parted from our venerable hostess, Mrs. King, and her amiable and peaceful family, with sincere regret. The old woman would have wept, but many sorrows had dried up the source of her tears! Nor is she a character likely to give way to effeminate softness. She has warmly urged us to return again another summer; but the grave, —the common destiny of all,—will soon receive her emaciated form. The last half of her life has been a series of sufferings, but her fortitude has never abandoned her. She attends her chapel every Sunday, and has promised to call on us, if we stay another week.

Our walks are now limited to Colonel Butler's beautiful villa near this, and to Loftus'-Hall. This evening I wandered alone to the shore, near our new abode, and found it, to my glad sur-

prise, perfectly delightful;—we have exchanged the sublime for the beautiful! The yet verdant fields, and one or two pretty meadows behind our house, descend in a gradual manner to the sea, which is near. No rude rocks shock the eye,—grassy banks run to the edge of the small ranges here; various little bays indent the shore, to which belong quantities of shells, and the most beautiful sand.

The sun is fast declining, and his mild and yellow lustre paints the sea, with a soft and weakened tinge, its little bays, and those sloping meadows, that so happily fall to the water-edge, and are blended with the sand by Autumn's last mournful smile, are also tinged with its beautiful rays. The scene is exquisitely beautiful, and quite new in every respect, as these parts being out of the peninsula, have been hitherto unknown to us. We have exchanged the Iliad for the Æneid,—or, if it please you better,—the Iliad for the Odyssey, in picturesque scenery. I know your partiality to Virgil, and have thus managed to avoid displeasing you. As I sit on a small green promontory, at whose base the waves are murmuring, I am reading this author you so justly admire. Since I found him sanctioned by your taste, and that of a dear friend, now no more, I am more and more pleased with Virgil, but I do not think his object in writing his epic at all comparable, though a grand one,

to those Homer had in view in his two great works. The Roman bard lived at that period in the history of Rome, when Augustus began to reign; he, as the historian says, "*qui cuncta dis-* "*cordiis civilibus fessa, nomine principis sub im-* "*perii accepit,*" who, in fact, finally changed the republic to a kingdom. It was the object of the poet to reconcile the once free Romans to this new state of things; and, accordingly, in the person of Æneas, a Trojan prince, he admirably pourtrays the rise, progress, and establishment of a monarchy in Italy, which was to conquer and govern the world.

Nothing can be finer than the execution of this plan: but to reconcile free men to a great military despotism, seems not to me a legitimate object for so exquisite a genius as Virgil. Epic poetry speaks the language and precepts of the divinity, when applied to correct and improve the state of mankind, but fails in this great and most sublime feature, when it inculcates the degradation of the human species! The Roman state, under her early kings, and the republic, displays great virtues, and the purest patriotism; till turned to conquest, it became full of vanity and avarice, and by its superior discipline and skill in arms, overrun and subjugated all the civilized world. The armies, and their generals, became ambitious and corrupt;—patriotism was lost in self;—and, after bloody contests for supremacy

in power amongst them, Augustus, an artful relative of one of Rome's greatest military characters, prompted by wily persons, took advantage of the confusion of Italy, and the extinction of almost all the great or good characters in the state by civil war, and declared himself emperor. His empire grew on the wretchedness of the times, and of his country. To vindicate and confirm this usurpation Virgil wrote. He was under great obligations to the new emperor, or protected and placed in easy independence by him, and acted from gratitude as well as from the best view of things he could take.

But I cannot deem that great genius excusable. His work, no doubt, contributed to maintain the Roman empire, in no small degree. The noble pride, and fine ideas of military glory which it inspired in every Roman breast, in room of the patriot feeling which guards home, but invades not the repose of others, must have powerfully animated and formed the Roman mind.

A Roman, in these times, reading, or hearing recited, the epic strains of this great bard, could not fail to experience all the gratifying sensations of self-love and national glory. He deduces his origin from Troy,—he is familiarized with all the Grecian heroes of Homer,—he accompanies the princely founder of future Rome to Carthage, —he shares his toils and dangers, and rejoices at his success in Italy. The matchless art and great

beauties the poet shews in his admirable allusions to the more modern times of Rome, from Romulus down to Augustus, must have had their full effect. Perhaps Virgil, as a Roman of the days of Augustus, felt all this himself, and wrote accordingly; but, in my mind, it derogates from genius and the epic muse, to flatter bad passions; and, under however splendid a garb, inculcate despotism. Homer was more simple—more virtuous—more grand in his objects. In the Iliad, and in the persons, both of Agamemnon and Achilles, he shews the danger of indulging the selfish passions of pride and anger, and proceeds through his immortal poem to paint all the dangers arising from want of concord, engendered by them. In the Odyssey, he teaches the misery of a state without a good presiding government.

Virgil's object was temporary, and narrowed to Italy, and, as I have said, an exceptionable one. Homer's ends were immortal as this globe, comprehending all mankind, and conducive to happiness and just liberty. The one inculcates lasting virtues, which are essential to man's prosperity and peace, and apply to every family as well as every nation. The other aims at eternalizing one military state under a bad government; and, by means of sentiments and passions, injurious to the repose and happiness of others. The epic poet should soar above the views of any specious and voluptuous prince, anxious to

secure his own quiet and selfish enjoyment, as Augustus was, and should write for the whole of his species, not for one selfish, timid, and vain being.

On my return to the house, I found our preparations for departure going on. The weather every day admonishes us to conclude our excursion before the driving sleet and storm "deform "the day delightless." Mr. Tottenham called to-day, and strongly advises our going by Duncannon Fort to Wexford. From thence we shall proceed to Dublin.

Duncannon Fort, we are informed, is highly deserving of attention, and we have decided on this route. We shall leave these peaceful and solitary parts of Wexford with great regret. In the sum of human life, few have enjoyed a happier moment. We have completed the objects of our tour; and not only viewed, by the true mode of inspecting a people, the district where the English first landed and made some settlement, but we have resided among them, and lived nearly as themselves.

Throwing away the appendages and circumstances of any superior rank, and treating the Irish with a frankness and plainness that won their esteem, and shewed they were considered as rational beings and fellow-citizens of one great empire—not despised vassals,—we found an ample and rich return. When they are not viti-

ated by cities, or degraded by petty despotism or poverty, the hearts of these people are rich depositories of the warmest feelings of humanity. They are generous and hospitable in their way; religious without bigotry; and possessed of extraordinary intellectual powers. The high rents, however, now indiscriminately press all the people of Ireland, and Wexford does not escape! The great quantities of sea-wrach, or woar, as they call it, thrown up on these coasts, make them better able than elsewhere to bear them; and the produce of the land brings high prices. The system cannot last much longer, or, indeed, be raised much higher. It is grievous to behold it pressing down these good people, and so many landlords insensible to the great truth, that moderate rents constitute the true wealth and prosperity of the landed interest. The practice of taking large fines, or granting leases, has grown with the war, and become a dreadful evil. It tends to throw all old resident families out of their paternal lands. They cannot afford this bribe to an agent, or greedy landlord; and the great destroyer of the farmer, the middleman, steps in with his ready-purse, and obtains the land. I do not allude to this spot peculiarly. The tenantry are tolerably easy, and the noble family over them seem to me to have proved humane and good landlords; but I advert to the whole island. I persuade myself, that

throughout this country we have witnessed beneficial marks of the English intermixture. I do not recur to Forth,—that is, a not-to-be mistaken evidence of the unspeakable advantage of their amicable union with the Irish—but to the general face of Wexford, wherever we have been.

The farm-houses are something in the English style, roomy and commodious. The farming is respectable, and you do not see so many wretched sub-divisions of land as elsewhere in Ireland. The leases given are of reasonable tenure on the whole, and one sees a somewhat of an independent yeomanry, reminding one a little of England. They are, however, depressed by party-prejudice; and, till its baneful operations be destroyed, agriculture can never thoroughly flourish. There, alas! is no resemblance to England!

Your country, my dear L., knows not the misery of power delegated to a dominant party, —braving, if not superior to that of government—and blighting the freedom of man, and all his struggles for honest independence!

The people of Wexford live more comfortably, however, than in most parts of Ireland. Their habits are better; they are honest, frugal, and industrious. They have abundance of butter, milk, pork and a good deal of poultry. Their

maritime situation affords them the facilities of procuring a plentiful and various supply of fish. Their potatoes are good, and their orchards supply them with fruit. Gardens of vegetables, too much neglected in Ireland, are here pretty common, and in Forth universal. They want much of English comfort, however. They have neither home-made cheese, nor home-made ale. They seldom see wheaten bread, and never bake it at home. They want better cattle, tackling, and carts. The Wexford car is a small and wretched machine. There is, above all, a want of home manufacture, which makes other countries happy and independent. Not like the Tyrolese, or Swiss, able to mix it with agriculture, and employ the long winter night usefully, the Irish spend it in weariness; in the idle practice of story-telling, or the blameable dissipation of the wake.

They are fond of field-sports, of an active nature—of hurling, leaping, and wrestling—excel in them all, and are not cruel in their rural sports in general.

At some future time, we meditate seeing Connaught in the same manner. From thence I may present you with new and different pictures. Never, however, shall we forget the kindness and hospitality we have experienced in Wexford. Will you not be pleased, my dear L., when I

tell you, that Mr. O'Flaherty, on hearing of our intended departure, offered his purse, and all that genuine friendship could dictate, to accommodate us on our way?

LETTER XIX.

Porter's Gate, Oct. 15, 1812.

AT what an awful moment do we live, my dear L.! This cold October morning fixes our attention on the operations in Russia.

The state of parties in England and in Ireland afflicts me! I grieve that the whole energies of the empire are not directed to the one grand point of danger from abroad, if the French succeed!

Under this impression, a few days ago, I commenced my letters to Sir William Smith, on the state of Ireland, and on foreign affairs:—They may displease some parties in these countries, though without any wish of mine to do so. I shall finish them before we leave this. It will be no displeasing reflection hereafter, let what will happen, to have advocated the cause of the son of our revered monarch in a trying hour, and warned this island against foreign arms or arts in the close of this year, 1812!

The frost has been felt here, near the sea, already. What will it not soon be in the great empire, now invaded by an infatuated adventurer, dragging with him half-subjugated Europe? Baffled by the cabinet of St. Petersburg, he has lost the precious time, that was in his power—his eyes open, he has set out too late for the season, and risks an immense and tremendous army, by the blind obstinacy of his proceeding. To satisfy the cravings of an inordinate appetite for blood, plunder, and vain-glory, which, in the true spirit of democracy, has grown a feverish disease in himself and the French, under successive misgovernment, he is plunging into Russian snows, on whose awful mounds stand invincible and patriotic hosts of warriors. Ignorant, or presuming that he is, he is now to be impressively taught—

> "Without the gods, how short a period stands
> "The proudest monument of mortal hands."

I have ventured to predict to our little party his certain overthrow, and the escape of Europe,—perhaps of our beloved British isles,—from his sanguinary and sordid hands! I have seen this man you know, my dear L.; and, presented at his brilliant and imposing court, have spoken to him. He did not at all strike me as a great man. His physiognomy is not that of one. The eye is a common grey, denoting, as I have often ob-

served, more of malignity than grandeur of mind. There is nothing of eye-brow to command or impress. The lower part of his jaw remarkably projects, which seldom belongs to a good temper or feeling mind. His person is small, not well composed, and has nothing majestic or pleasing. The natural antipathy I have to despots, military or civil, did not increase my respect for one then exercising a base system of oppression and imprisonment over France, in time of peace. I neither forgot Venice, nor devastated Italy, St. Domingo, or Egypt! He seemed to understand nothing of this noble island of Ireland, more than to have a general idea of its religious differences with England. He erroneously thought the entire country Catholic. I afterwards knew that he entertained a very poor idea of the Irish nation. The mere acquisition of power cannot, I always thought, be said to make a great man. Many fortuitous circumstances, and the talents of others cunningly made use of,—unblushing audacity, calling itself genius,—and the most daring and artful use of falsehoods, may place a man in possession of it. How easily is an ignorant and vain population deluded into the idea, that he is great! How willingly does this great Leviathan swallow the coarsest and most vulgar baits! —Greatness consists in the qualities of the human mind, improved by education and observation, and producing lasting and mighty fruits of

genius for the benefit of mankind. It is original, and depends not on the mere suggestions, or aid of others. Power does not confer it; but merely affords a theatre for its operations. In this, as well as other parts of the human character, a false as well as the true species may be distinguished. Mankind are frequently deceived by the latter. It might, perhaps, have been as well for the ultimate fame of the usurper of France, if the good priest of Ferns had never extricated him from the water. His fall and retrogression will be most painful to himself; and his character, for original and fertile genius, for ever utterly destroyed!

Porter's Gate.

Mrs. King has paid us a visit, as she promised, but I am sorry to say in much grief. If I may borrow an expression from the Odyssey, "The "dark brow of silent sorrow" is her's. She had, a year or two ago, learnt some particulars of the death of a favorite younger son in the West-Indies, and had preferred some claim for prize-money and effects to the navy-office, but it had been done imperfectly. She is now renewing the application, as the times bear hard, and our poor old friend, I fear, may say,—

"What cannot want?—the best she will expose,
"And I am learn'd in all her train of woes."

The revival of this affair, and her being obliged

to administer to her son's effects, have revived all her sorrow for him, and the sad appearance of the venerable matron, bending under so much melancholy, and a long course of troubled years, filled us all with compassion. The Admiralty has, however, behaved with great humanity to her, and she will soon receive a sum of money. There are many difficulties, however, in the way of the poor Irish in making their claims. They often fill up the printed paper, sent from Somerset House, improperly, and then receive nothing.—Taking out administration is expensive. The proof of the death of the sailor, whose prize-money and effects are claimed by relatives, is often difficult, sometimes impossible to be attained by them, when he dies in foreign parts. In such cases they have not the same advantages and information as the English; and the money is frequently lost to them for ever. If every captain in the navy were to keep an exact register of the parentage, parish, and county in Ireland, of every Irishman on board, and wrote, on a death happening, to the clergyman or priest on the spot, perhaps on receiving a certificate, vouched on oath, through the same hands, he might be enabled to transmit an order for the money claimed. This is a mere suggestion; but some better regulation were desirable than now exists. In maritime affairs, there is another subject of great importance, which certainly claims

the attention of government—the case of ship-wreck on the coasts of Ireland. There are about sixteen maritime counties. The great points are, to save the lives of the ship-wrecked; to restrain the people from plunder or violence; to punish them when guilty; and reward them well for good behaviour and meritorious exertions; and to procure for the owners as much property as possible, and fully and honestly to account for it. The salvage laws are but crude, and made for former times. They put too much power into the hands of any neighbouring magistrate, and the residing revenue-officers. Power is too frequently abused in Ireland; and if great temptation sometimes occur, it were desirable to have it wholesomely restrained. If each maritime county were divided into districts, near the shore, and associations of gentry, clergy, and farmers, with a number of stout peasantry attached to them as police, and paid by the county, they would effect great good. Each association should have its depôt for goods, &c. &c.; and a gentleman, with a salary, as a maritime commissioner, should reside contiguous to some part of the sea, preside as chairman of the association, report cases to government or commissioners of revenue, and correspond with proprietors, relatives of the distressed, or drowned, &c. &c.

Something like this might do good. Some regulation is greatly wanted, to prevent plunder-

ing of all sorts; to stop perjury, and to guard from injury the most unfortunate of beings—the shipwrecked and afflicted children of sorrow, thrown on a coast, too often merciless; and amongst those who too often add to their misery, and injure those they ought to guard!

Believe me, &c. truly your's.

LETTER XX.

Porter's Gate, October 24, 1812.

MY DEAR L.

THIS day we proceeded, by a most lovely walk, near to Bag and Bun. We followed the shore from this for a little, and then found, by a gradual ascent, a level green kind of terrace-walk, running for two or three miles along a magnificent rocky shore. It was our last walk, as we leave this the 30th, and shall reach Dublin shortly. We naturally enough end by visiting a quarter that had been the primary object of a tour which has since become so much amplified, that I fear I have long ago fatigued you with my letters describing it.

The day was exceedingly fine, and the blue expanse of an unruffled ocean was soothing and cheerful to behold.

Great numbers of sea-fowl, gulls and others, sat tranquilly on the rocks far below us, or flew circling and hovering over the sea. Deep gulphs, and romantic towering rocks, added to the sublime beauty of the marine scenery. We are all so fond of these scenes, that we prolonged our walk insensibly till we were near Bag and Bun; but it had got late, and we contented ourselves with a distant view of the interesting spot for the last time. We had lost nothing of the impression it had first made, and again beheld it with awe-inspired feelings! But we seemed to have attained another period in history, and the departure of Henry, from Wexford, was recent in our minds. It was now painful to reflect, how ill-appreciated and ill-rewarded these first warriors, who landed here, had been by a monarch who put into the hands of others all the fruits of their enterprizing deeds.

Methought we saw Fitzstephens wandering dejectedly on the shore, musing on royal ingratitude. Deprived of possessions that were dear to him, and placed wherever new dangers sprung up, by malicious and timid deputies, he had been made to drink a bitter cup!

He learnt to know princes too late. At first they are generous in rewarding a noble mind, which has achieved much for them; but soon the object becomes disagreeable. They enjoy and benefit by the acquisition, and additional

safety procured them; but grow jealous, or weary of the champion who has served them! Pride prevents just acknowledgment, and ingratitude springs from the greatness of the good conferred.

Fitzstephens calculated not on a great monarch listening to mean whisperers, or giving to useless, or pernicious courtiers, what had been his just reward!

Ah! my dear L., how deeply melancholy was this great man's last hour, in the south of Ireland—where he last reposed!

Our return was late in the evening; but the rising moon soon succeeding the mild gleam of an autumnal or almost wintry sun-setting, dispelled every thought, but that of admiring the enchanting scenery gradually displaying itself before and around us! Successively the cliffs, the sea, the verdant bank, were illumined by that silvery and softened light, which, near the sea, has redoubled lustre. There was perfect silence; the tranquillity of the mind too was no way disturbed; for though distant from home, and on the wildest path imaginable, so entirely and justly are we convinced of the goodness of the people around, that we never entertain any apprehension, however late the hour of the evening. The picturesque of night-scenes is more strongly allied to poetry than any other. The imagination reigns supreme! The silence and rest of

the world favors composition; and sublime conceptions are formed in forgetting its little interests and pursuits. The wonderful works, and unfathomable designs, of the Creator absorb our attention, and the bright ornaments of a mighty sky charm us, while the soul is filled with reverence. I have no need to remind you of the excellent description of such a moonlight-scene, in the pages of Homer,——

"As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night;"

it is well known to you, and is a most faithful delineation of nature. Is it not also, my dear L., an awful proof of all this frame of things existing thousands of years ago in exactly the same manner as now, with a durability and order that almost oppress us in the contemplating?

We arrived safely at home, and are finishing the Iliad, in the few remaining evenings we have dedicated to it, as our mornings are given to packing up books, and regulating papers. The last scenes of this sublime work are truly affecting;—the death of Hector particularly so;—where Achilles says to the fainting warrior,—"Come, and receive thy fate;"—Who does not feel? The sufferings of Priam and Hecuba are pourtrayed in a masterly manner; and the interview between the former and Achilles inimitably fine! The one is not yet satisfied with revenge for the loss of Patrocles, and is wrapt in gloomy

thoughts; the other, weak with the imbecility of age, and the sorrow occasioned by the loss of such a son, implores his destroyer to grant his body! the scene between them is beyond all compare. When Achilles relents,—when their tears begin to flow,—what a faithful and mournful picture from nature, of the griefs of man! How strongly exemplifying the lines in the tenth book——

> "To labour is the lot of man below;
> "And when Jove gave us life, he gave us woe."

I formerly quoted some passages of lamentation by the parents over the corse of Hector.—What can surpass the pathetic and patriotic speeches of the queen? What more noble than her glorying in her dead son, and her disdain of Achilles' savage insults to the body? But these vivid exhibitions of nature are closed. We leave all these kings and warriors. Troy totters, and soon must fall! We have now made all our small arrangements, and shall depart in two days.

Porter's Gate, Oct. 20th.

The sun has arisen with paly lustre, to light up for us, for the last time, these peaceful scenes! His orb just appears, and Nature yet sleeps. Soon will the cares of man be renewed;—soon will cruelty and treachery rush on their prey;—soon will avarice renew its toils, and vanity again

flit its empty hour;—soon will the catastrophe in Russia approach, and this unfeeling destroyer of so many lives, and so much happiness, meet a great repulse. Like another Aladin, starting from obscurity and penury, he had possessed himself of a talisman, by which he enthralled genius, and lorded it over nations! He is with his own hands breaking this magic lamp, against the iron walls of Russia! Providence has thus ordered it, and mankind will have the satisfaction of witnessing, ere very long, the fall of this execrable military despot. It is matter of exultation of the most heart-felt kind, that the British Isles have both withstood and assisted powerfully to overthrow his revolutionary government.

We have been reading, with great pleasure, the Emperor of Russia's proclamation. The best feelings of the Russians, and of the head of their government, are roused. The great mistake of the French usurper has been to undervalue human nature too much,—to judge of it, perhaps, from himself. He never seems to have comprehended what real patriotism was; and it is now about to inflict a heavy punishment on him. I feel exceeding great satisfaction at this approaching consummation of things at the very close of our tour and residence in Wexford. We have, in idea, attended the landing, and followed the pacific march of a great monarch, coming to this

island as a benefactor, and the extinguisher of numerous military despotisms. We have applauded his bloodless and merited success. We now behold, in modern times, the ruthless, uninvited, and unprincipled invasion of a great country, to enslave it, and build on its ruin the slavery and misery of Europe.

How manifest the difference between a great, hereditary, and well-educated monarch, accustomed to power, and not daring to abuse his sacred trust, and the revolutionary adventurer, trampling on all the principles of legislation, and of the laws of nations, and using power in the most sanguinary manner, to support the false glare and ephemeral purposes of the despot's hour. We have perceived, in this peaceful country, no blind admiration of this man, similar to what is found in Dublin, or even in London. I beheld, some years ago, this inveterate enemy of liberty and religion, admired in a strange manner by the nobles and commoners of this great empire. Amongst this simple and virtuous people he is judged calmly and impartially, and considered as a sanguinary and mean character. I shall, my dear L., for the sake of this island at large, however, greatly rejoice at the completion of his downfall. A morbid and feverish state of mind has been kept up in many, by his successes, added to his insidious practices, and by a

blindly-cherished sentiment of relief from foreign power. I sincerely hope to see the former very soon at an end, and the latter corrected and extinguished by the good sense of this noble and talented, but credulous and too susceptible people. Far, far beyond the effects of my humble and feeble labours, would be their own return, on self-conviction, to a calmer state, and to perfect friendship and confidence with England! This may be hoped on good grounds, when war shall end, and the shining fragments of this European Aladin's lamp scatter the Continent, and discover his mighty, but illusive imposture.

We shall, therefore, conclude this Tour in Ireland with great cheerfulness, satisfied that better prospects open for this most interesting island, and pleased to repose for the present from our pedestrian toils. We set out to-morrow morning for Duncannon Fort, on our way, which we desire greatly to see.

Believe me, most truly, &c. &c.

LETTER XXI.

Fowke's Mill, Co. Werford, Oct. 30, 1812.

MY DEAR L.

YESTERDAY morning early we bade adieu to the Hook, and its vicinity. The walk to Duncannon is very pretty; the road good, and the views very pleasing, consisting of various openings of the sea, romantic shores, and a cheerful country. We arrived at twelve o'clock.

The fort here was erected by the English, to command and defend the passage up to Waterford, and is situated on a small, lofty, and projecting rocky promontory, running into the sea on a beautiful and extended sandy shore. The opposite coast is beautiful, and enriched by numerous handsome country-seats. There is a small neat town joins the fort. We were readily admitted, and allowed to see the interior. Captain Hort, the commander, perceiving we were strangers, and a little fatigued, with all the urbanity of a British officer, approached, and invited us to rest, and take some refreshment in his apartments; an invitation we gladly accepted. It is thus the pedestrian's path is often unexpectedly strewed with flowers. This gallant young officer had served under the lamented Sir John Moore, (whose likeness hung over his chimney-piece), and

was, I believe, intimate with him. He mourned his loss sincerely, and spoke in affectionate and high terms of the departed hero.

Captain Hort had lost a leg in Spain; and, though a very young man, was now invalided in consequence. We conversed a long time on Spain, and the war there, a subject I always delight in, as there Britain first began to undermine and cast down the fabric of revolutionary tyranny in France, latterly called Imperial. After spending a most pleasing, and, indeed, instructive hour with this interesting and hospitable officer, we withdrew.

The interior of the fort is not very large, but it affords delightful views of the sea, and seems to have been very strong. After the dreadful massacre at Wexford, Cromwell marched to Ross, which soon surrendered, and sent a detachment under Ireton to besiege Duncannon Fort. It held out very valiantly under Wogan, the commander, assisted by Lord Castlehaven; and, at length, the garrison, making a sally (I believe by descending on the sand when the tide was out), repulsed the enemy, who retired in confusion. Cromwell was here signally checked, when almost every town and city in Ireland yielded, in a very pusillanimous manner, to that sanguinary leader. But the Irish, divided into parties, Protestant and Catholic, had ill-acted together in support of the crown, and the severest vengeance was fully in-

flicted on them by a fanatic government, which had deceived both.

This romantic fort is well worth every traveller's inspection, and fully repaid us for taking rather a circuitous route to Wexford. Our walk to this village was long and tiresome. We arrived late and weary at a small and good inn, situated in this picturesque little spot. As our tour is now concluded, I shall here bid you farewell. We have received from it both entertainment and instruction;—have seen much picturesque beauty,—and have found fresh cause to admire and pity this interesting people.

I am, my dear L., most truly yours.

WALKS

THROUGH

IRELAND

IN

1812, 1814, AND 1817.

SECOND WALK,

TO DANGAN-CASTLE, AND THE BOYNE, IN THE COUNTY OF MEATH, IN 1814.

LETTER I.

Trim, Oct. 30, 1814.

MY DEAR L.

YESTERDAY we walked to Summer-hill. We have seen the castle of the family of Britain's hero, towering amidst its native woods, and venerable from its remote antiquity. With what different feelings, and how much greater alacrity, did I hasten to view this inanimate building, surrounded by rural beauty and simplicity, than to behold General Bonaparte, when styled a Consul, in a very splendid court, encompassed by princes, ambassadors, generals, and admirers!

The sun had not long appeared, when we arose and found the village of Summer-hill, which we scarcely saw last night, to be an extremely pretty one, far surpassing the ordinary ones of Ireland. The demesne of Summer-hill joins the village.

The house is a large, plain, stone building. We walked through the grounds till breakfast, and very much enjoyed a fine autumnal morning there. The day brightened as we left the village, and we saw, at a mile's distance, the gate and woods of Dangan. Finding some difficulty in gaining admittance, we passed down the side of the demesne wall, and pursuing a noble road, with woods on each side, reached an eminence from whence Dangan-castle burst on our view. From a spot where former warriors had resided (for the castle was built in King John's reign), and English chieftains had ruled, Ireland had given back to the sister-country a hero, who was to raise her name through Europe, and aid in emancipating her nations! Of English extraction, the stock had been transplanted here, and at length produced the glorious fruit of which Britain is so justly proud. From a quarter, too, where, in Ireland's early times, so many monarchs had resided,—so many warriors assembled,—where glory was, perhaps, the only thought of so many heroic men, had issued, in these times, the leader of the armies of the whole empire, who had vied with Romans in patience and valour, and freed all Spain and Portugal from their ferocious invaders!

But not for the glare of arms did we admire him, as for the noblest and undaunted perseverance in relieving Europe. From the peninsula he fired signals of hope, by his numerous victo-

ries, to the afflicted nations, till France's oppressor sickened at their repetition. By Britain and her government was he well seconded. Had Hannibal been so supported at home, never had Rome trampled on the bleeding earth.

The windows of the castle glistened in the sun, and the many-coloured woods added highly to its beauty. We remained long gazing on the ancient edifice before us. Again and again did we look, without being satiated. What scope for reflection! What room for gratitude to Heaven! Hence proceeded the young noble who was designed by it to stem the career and conquests of France, and co-operating (though distant from them) with the kings and great captains of Europe, accelerate the fall of her last revolutionary leader:—the British isles, constitution, and laws, guarded from a truly barbarian hand; and the unhappy nations of the Continent saved from continued disgrace and degradation;—and all this so much through this hero's means.

What numerous thoughts arose! What a manifestation of the will of the Deity, by means so unexpected, to overthrow the towering and blood-stained fabric of French ambition! It is the birth-place of one of the benefactors of mankind we behold! A selfish and arrogant man conquers for himself, and omits neither falsehood nor cruelty to secure his ends. This hero fought for his country and mankind; and is respectable by his truth and

candour. It matters not, that all possible good to be hoped, has not been accomplished in France and Europe by his deeds. The evil removed was monstrous. We are not to presume that every thing is henceforth to be as we wish, or to forget benefits received, because greater and continued ones have not followed. It were vulgar and base ingratitude to Him who from on high dispenses all good! With many such thoughts, we beheld this interesting castle. The demesnes are very extensive, and the woods noble. We were permitted to see the interior, but it is quite a ruin. Since the Earl of Mornington disposed of it, it has passed through several hands, and has undergone much alteration. It has lately suffered by fire, so that the external and distant view we had at first was more gratifying than the closer inspection. Besides, you know how much imagination acts in regard to a distant object. The shell of the castle, which had so fine an effect with its battlements and turrets amongst the crowding woods, had a different one when we were near. Still all appeared to us classic and historic ground, and if the state re-purchased it, as an occasional residence for the Duke of Wellington in this island, I think such a mark of public gratitude would be rightly conferred by his native island. It might yet be pleasing to him, in the evening of his days, to walk under his paternal shades.

We lingered long in the demesne of Dangan. I made a sketch of the castle, which I enclose; but, doubtless, on your return from England you will yourself visit it: the scene is worthy of your mind. The improvements and lakes, which once highly adorned it, are lost through neglect, and the fine gardens are uncultivated.

The rest of the evening we walked through the adjacent country, which is fertile and well-cultivated. From every part, the woods, and frequently the castle of Dangan, were visible. We continued to walk on magic ground; the varied landscapes of a fine corn-country, always terminated by the widely-extended woods of Dangan, could not but please! In a very humble cottage we procured potatoes and milk. It was painful to observe throughout the country great and general poverty. Though the contiguous demesnes of Summer-hill and Dangan give a fine appearance in the vicinity of the village, yet other parts through which we walked were very different. The peace has now begun to operate, as I have always thought it must, and rents have fallen,—or, rather, the produce of farms has fallen, and the rents are still held up by landlords. We learned that through Meath, as far as Athboy, the misery thus occasioned has been already extreme. In another year it will become worse; for any small capital, means, or stock, farmers have, will be exhausted by an iniquitous

practice of extorting high rents, when war prices for land-produce have ceased, and the markets of the world are open.

The book we are studying is a large and instructive one; and let me entreat you, my dear L., to consider how much pains it costs the pedestrian to read it well. Consider, also, that all the readings of it I transmit to you are founded on, or connected with, facts. My statements shall be as impartial as possible; but often going through great fatigue, pressed for time, or harassed by the weather, must be imperfect enough. Wanting neither to exaggerate or diminish,—" neither " to extenuate, or set down aught in malice,"—I shall write to you, as fully as I can, on the complicated distresses of agriculture.

The efforts to sustain rents by bills, prohibiting the entry of foreign grain till the price becomes high at home, seems a desperate resource, which I should never have expected a British senate to have had recourse to. It was a sure way to produce famine, and could only prolong the lingering agonies of the landed gentry and farmers. Was a great commercial and manufacturing empire to deprive itself of food from any quarter of the globe, in order that rents of land should remain high! That the experiment should have been made by so much congregated ability, information, and genius, is to me matter of great surprise!

We have heard of the high rents being demanded and exacted in parts of Meath with extreme severity. The most afflicting cases of the suffering small farmers, in consequence, are mentioned. It appears a plan to make general mendicity! Landlords do not think of the poet's words:—

> "But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
> "When once destroyed, can never be supplied;"

and appear rather indifferent to the depopulation of their estates! Many great farmers too, and gentry, have most unpatriotically lost their temper, and cease to give employment to the people. They are rejecting the bounties of nature, when they are not to contribute sufficiently to the demands of avarice, and our great population will be shortly perishing amidst cheapness of provisions! What a disease in the mind does this avarice become, thus rendering man callous to the groans and sighs of his neighbour and fellow-man! How totally repugnant to Christianity! Nay, how it eats out the very heart's-core, leaving that dry shell in which no "milk of human "kindness," no compassion, no generosity remains! It is the god of self. But in its dreary territory exist no motives to noble deeds, no love of country, no soft benevolence—the fainting relative expires at its door, and the child of sorrow turns silently away!

We returned to our little inn, at Summer-hill, with melancholy sensations! In the morning we had walked abroad with joy; for ideas of true glory elevate the mind—and who could be so dull as not to be inspired by them in the vicinity of Dangan? But now we felt the more awful and affecting sensations of sympathy for the anguish of so many millions through this fair island, and throughout the empire, reduced to the greatest wretchedness, by the termination of a war so full of that glory which had so lately dazzled us!

After a slight repast in our quiet and comfortable little inn, we were glad to exchange such reflections for tranquil repose.

With the first gleams of a golden sun, illuminating the peaceful village of Summer-hill, we set out for Trim. This noble orb of day is so much the friend and cheerful companion of the pedestrian's early path, that you need not wonder at, and must not blame my frequent mention of the delightful effects of his presence. —To see him so frequently light-up various and new scenes, and covering the earth with his beams, is one of the many advantages of the true pedestrian. To see him thus is but to adore. For who can be then insensible to the existence, the bounty, and the magnificence of a God? As he now advanced "rejoicing in the east," we again approached Dangan-castle, on our way to Trim. Again we beheld it. The first dawn of

morning was on its walls; the autumnal woods reddened with the rising-sun; the cheerful red-breast poured forth its song, and the harmless sheep grazed through the demesne. I shall not describe to you my sensations:—what new and pleasant reflections arose, and what harmony was in this scene!

Proceeding towards Trim, we passed through some of the finest and best cultivated country we had seen in Ireland. Good farm-houses, large fields, and every appearance of good crops and proper cultivation, again gave pleasing tokens of English improvement and early settlement.

We were now approaching the ancient residence of Hugh de Lacy, the favourite and confidant of Henry the Second; to whom he made the improvident, and, indeed, unwarrantable and unjust grant of all this territory. It was besides very impolitic, and renewing the old pernicious Irish system. Young de Lacy, in the reign of John, declared himself independent of the Crown of England. We now learnt a very interesting fact, from the country people, who were decent and obliging in these parts—that the Duke of Wellington had resided in a small country-house, with great modesty and privacy, (when Lord Wellesley was proposing to part with Dangan,) for two or three years, near Trim. We had discovered more than we expected. This, then, was the

chosen retreat and residence of the hero, before he distinguished himself in India. Here he formed his mind, and quietly studied that science which was to lead him to so great celebrity, and in his hands extinguish the vain boasts of revolutionary France! We heard of no wonderful excesses, or extraordinary premature actions. His mind was one of those which, like the oak, grows slowly; but attains a majesty and solidity of genius different from that of other men.

We proceeded, with much eagerness, to this little country-house; we soon saw it, near the road, within a mile of Trim, buried in trees. We reached the gate of its avenue, which is straight, of modest appearance, and lined with tall ash-trees. The house is perfectly rural, with a small lawn, and pretty shrubberies round it; but very simple, and just fit for a small domestic family. The apartments are commodious, and all the accommodations good, but on the most modest scale. The garden pleased us most; it is good and quite rural, suiting the character of the place. With what pleasure we walked in it!—

In a retired spot we found and cropt a fine cabbage-rose, in full bloom. This, in the end of October, and at the retreat of Wellington, was really charming. I could not help feeling the pleasing superstitious presentiment, that it was a precursor and harbinger of greater deeds by the

hero, and, indeed, expressed my sentiments to this effect. I venture to transmit to you a few stanzas which the incident inspired, and the rose seemed to call for:—

"Thou gem that thus glisten'st on autumn's cold breast,
"Art the signal of glories more bright!
"The herald of safety, to nations opprest
"Thou breath'st o'er the senses delight!

"Perhaps, from thy stem, has thy Wellington chose
"Such a blossom—and fragrant as thou;
"Or love has impos'd such a favourite rose
"Where laurels now circle his brow!

"Thy leaves are all moist—'tis that many shall die,
"And the angel that bade thee to bloom,
"Tho' pleas'd that new glory thy hero was nigh,
"Mingled tears with thy rose-bud's perfume!"

I gathered this rose with care, and shall preserve it, even when its faded leaves shall no longer please the eye!

I send you a small sketch of Wellington's house, which is become a great favourite with us. I am inclined to think, that when General Bonaparte began his splendid career in Italy, the Duke was residing here. That noble and almost Roman simplicity, which has distinguished so many of Britain's heroes and great men, early marked him.

When the one young man—half educated, ravenous for power, seizing it by any means, and already floating on the revolutionary tide, had

made his name so well known on the Continent —the other—calm and studious, dignified in this rural abode, and completing his education by repeated pains, fitted himself to command men, and to ensure the respect and admiration of his political adherents!

On bidding farewell to this very interesting little spot, which has considerable picturesque beauty within itself, we passed on to Trim, a considerable town, of about three thousand inhabitants. The jail is pretty good, and is well situated. The old castle is the only striking feature of the place.* It is seated on the memorable Boyne, which is here not large, though a very handsome stream, and beautifully blue, as all the rivers of Ireland we had seen; it is very large, and of a very commanding appearance, but was much injured by Cromwell's artillery. Hugh de Lacy, probably, made this his principal position. An anecdote is recorded of the fate of that nobleman, strongly marking treachery and bigotry in the lower Irish of those days.

De Lacy had recovered his territory, after some of those irruptions often made by chieftains, and

* The castle of Trim once held imprisoned, in the reign of Richard the Second, one of England's greatest heroes and kings, when a youth.—Henry the Fifth accompanied Richard the Second to Ireland, and was imprisoned, by that weak monarch, in Trim-castle, for some slight or imaginary offence.

was engaged in repairing one of his strong places, which he had fixed on the scite of a ruined abbey. The old noble superintended and even occasionally engaged in the works to encourage his labourers, when, as he stooped down, one of them drew out a concealed battle-axe, and smote off his head at a blow. He fled, and was concealed and protected by his friends. It is said, however, that John de Courcey and Young de Lacy took a cruel revenge on the whole neighbourhood!

Trim is remarkable for the occasional residence of Swift, near it, at his parsonage of Laracor, in the last century. As this extraordinary and great man was a distinguished pedestrian, we should have felt more than usual pleasure in paying our respects to his transient residence, but a new and greater object began to animate us; and, in walking, it is peculiarly necessary to apportion your time well to your distances, and not waste your powers on too many objects. We resign this pleasure very reluctantly, for Swift's genius has claims to lasting admiration! Happy for him if he had never known courts or ministers, to embitter him by disappointment, and sadden the great remainder of his life by too painful recurrence to the past—a weakness unworthy so great a man; who ought not to have repined after, or been soured by the loss of what was so little worth regretting.

We shall proceed to Navan this evening, though somewhat late in the day. Having been gratified by seeing Dangan, and the interesting rural retreat of Wellington on our way, we shall hasten to explore the beauties of the Boyne till it falls into the sea at Drogheda. We shall behold the venerable spot where William crossed it, and the theatre of action where he decided the fate of this island and of the empire. I must conclude this, therefore, by saying, how truly I am, &c. &c.

LETTER III.

Slane, Oct. 31, 1814.

MY DEAR L.

We arrived late last night at Navan, a considerable and populous country town of Meath. Our walk was tedious and very fatiguing. Add to this, we saw a great deal of wretchedness—mud-cottages without chimnies;—no gardens, no poultry; and, too often, the sad evidence of a joyless existence, from smoke issuing from the doors and windows of the cottages. Meath, however, is a fine arable county; but the want of comfortable dwellings, and of green crops, of trees, and all the minor appendages of rural life,

make it appear, except where demesnes occur, which in some places are numerous, very uninteresting. We had fine views of the Boyne from Trim and near Navan; beautiful places on it are very common. There it is joined by the Blackwater, a handsome river, and thenceforth it flows with greater grandeur.

Navan is a large populous country town, situate in the midst of a fertile country, having some internal trade, but very insufficient employment for its population. The long rows of miserable cottages which present themselves to the eye on entering Navan, kept in a very filthy manner in the interior, (and rendered unhealthy and odious, by pools of water and heaps of moist manure under their windows and before their doors,) give an unpleasing picture of human nature, and almost realize the dreams of the satirical Swift. Navan, too truly, may be said to represent most of the small towns in Ireland, in this respect. Laziness and pride operate strongly on this people. The latter prevents them seeing their own faults, or admitting them—the former makes them live wallowing in a nasty manner, rather than using the exertions they ought to make their dwellings and themselves somewhat decent. It will not do to lay the fault solely on the degradation of the country, by a bad system. There is a foolish, and, indeed, incredible degree of family pride runs through this race, which gives

numbers of them, of the lowest class, a saucy insolence and contempt for others, generating in itself a neglect of education and of industry; which makes so many towns, villages, and so much of the country not much superior to the approach to Navan! Family pride often obliterates, or choaks every good quality in man!

The vicinity of Navan is very pretty, and the junction of the rivers increases the beauty of part of the scenery very much. It was the close of their market-day when we arrived. We found a small inn, not very clean, as is mostly the case in Irish towns of this description; but which afforded us a good and plentiful dinner. From its windows we witnessed a scene strongly illustrative of the extreme poverty of Ireland. A small farmer's cart, with a quantity of butter-milk for sale, had arrived in the market-place about the time we reached our inn. Heavy rain came on, and continued all the evening. The poor people, from every part of the town, hastened with various vessels, and with much anxiety, to buy this butter-milk at a halfpenny per quart. A woman and boy served out to them, during heavy and chilling rains, large quantities of it. The patience of the farmer's wife was exemplary; she continued her fatiguing office till all was sold, though she had early become quite wet with the rain. Age and youth—the most wretched,—and some quite respectable

—attended, and bought up this milk, which, in England, is given to hogs. The spectacle was an affecting one, and made a deep impression on our minds. Ah! my dear L., all is not right when the population of a whole town run with avidity to buy butter-milk in a cold, rainy October evening.

If legislators, or ministers, or princes, ever bestow a passing half-hour on these pages, which you persuade me may be of utility to the empire, if published, let them, in idea, visit every abode where this wretched milk was carried—let them behold the conclusion of this cold October evening, and examine if there be firing to boil the indifferent potatoes—if there be candle to light the sorry meal—if the roof keeps out the rain, and, when the midnight-hour is near—if there be a bed to lie on! Then shall not some god-like measures follow this inquiry, which they have condescended to make? Shall not man in exalted station, surrounded by power and luxury, long to alleviate this misery? and, by deeds of beneficence, unconnected with party-feeling, or motive, rescue his fellow-creatures from nights, from winters, from years, such as this October night in Navan!—Have I said Navan? should I not rather write Ireland? The instance is particular—the suffering is general!

We left Navan this morning with the earliest dawn. A fine morning had succeeded the rain,

and the Boyne, swelled by it and the great accession of a tributary river, foamed and rolled away with majestic fury.

Anxious to reach the historic ground where the rival kings, the father and son-in-law, had contended for empire, we rapidly pursued our course, several beautiful villas and seats adorning the Boyne as we proceeded. Mr. Buxton's charming place on the river, near Navan, pleased us very much. To enumerate all would be impossible. Sometimes the ruined, but still towering castle, stood near this fine stream, reminding us of ancient grandeur and feudal times; here and there an occasional good farm-house, or the tasteful cottage of some gentleman, with thriving plantations, or old woods, enriched the view. The "orient beams" of the pleasant sun made every thing gay, and we very soon came near Slane; when, from an impending hill, we suddenly opened on the view of the noble woods, castle, and village of Slane, whilst the Boyne glided amongst the former, and gently washed the green declivity on which this most beautiful of modern castles stood.

We passed through the demesne on our way to this village, and were delighted with every step. The castle is of that modern antique so much followed in these days, though not quite appropriate to modern times. Feudal grandeur had a sort of wild magnificence in its abode we can no

longer see. The powdered footman ill replaces the armed esquire, or soldier ready for war. The private gentleman, or the noble modestly dressed, and all the modern elegance of his family, are not substitutes for the war-like and haughty baron in armour, and his dames gorgeously apparelled. The ancient picturesque of the inhabitants, and of the interior and environs of the castle, no more exists. A century or two hence some of these buildings may make fine ruins; but at present, however handsome, want much of their proper picturesque. Slane-castle is a very noble building. The situation on the border of the Boyne, and enriched on all sides by the finest trees and woods, is truly charming. As the Marquis of Conyngham was from home, we did not seek to be admitted to see the apartments.

The servants, at great places in Ireland, are often more difficult of approach than their masters, and are frequently strongly tinged with the haughty insolence I formerly alluded to, as springing from beholding an abject and wretched population crawling round the doors of wealth or power. On leaving the castle, we pursued a noble walk along the Boyne of great extent, and adorned with trees worthy of England.

This village, which we reached to breakfast, is certainly one of the best and prettiest in Ireland. It is formed into a sort of square; the houses are handsome and modern, inhabited by

private gentlemen; and there is none of the squalid wretchedness which shocked us at Navan and Trim. The views from this village are quite delightful, and the vicinity of Slane-castle, the Boyne, and Lord Conyngham's fine demesne, all placed in a fertile country, make it a most pleasing retreat. Having breakfasted, and ordered a late dinner, we set out for the scene of war in 1690.

The walk proved a very beautiful one, the Boyne increasing in majesty as it flowed towards Drogheda. Its banks were thickly covered with fine seats; and on our way we found a luxuriance of trees very rare in Ireland. We had just visited the birth-place of a great man, the enemy of French tyranny in our own times. We were now to behold the spot on which the immortal William defeated Louis the Fourteenth, in the person of James, and the much misguided Irish.

Permit me, my dear L., before we arrive there, to make a few remarks. The history of Ireland is so little studied here, or in England, that I may be excusable.

James the Second, and his royal brother, Charles the Second, had laboured for some years previous to the accession of the former to the throne, at the pernicious work of establishing arbitrary power in England. For this, Charles had become the mean pensioner of France. It appears, that this careless and unprincipled

prince was constantly urged on by his brother, the Duke of York, in this base design; but I fear the violence of a party, calling themselves patriotic, threw the king more into his brother's and the French king's arms, than a man not inclined to tyranny, and fond rather of pleasure than of power (which he seems to have despised) would otherwise have been. The melancholy truth appears now too evident, that French gold and French arts operated on all sides.

Charles's pleasures first made him the needy slave of France,—he never felt as the monarch of England;—he was always a jeering voluptuary;—when clothed in royal robes, or seated on a throne;—if he had money, he cared not who supplied it;—faithless to his friends, and indifferent to the happiness or misery of men, he had no country, for all his feelings centred in self; and he had no proper pride, for he laughed at all that was august and sacred in character or public life. The unprincipled fury of party made this man decide to be a tyrant. Amidst his voluptuousness, his weaknesses, his easy indifference, and his polished and captivating manners, a vein of obstinacy was to be discovered. This, his brother James, who was a tyrant from principle, knew, and profited by. The factious leaders of the day pushed the king to extremities. Another republic seemed to be threatened, and his life in danger. France wished for internal confusion in

England, and her ambassador, Barillon, well seconded her odious schemes! She desired not to see Charles too powerful, therefore she seconded the views of the patriots of the time, who (and what will not party-revenge do?) accepted her aid:—she wished not the patriots should triumph and establish a powerful government, therefore she supplied Charles with money, and offered him troops! What a lesson to every country, but peculiarly to this empire, against all foreign interference!

Charles was supposed by some to have had his moments of compunction, but they were few;—and the malignant and narrow-minded James was ever ready to stifle them, and prevent the deluded king reconciling himself with England, by conduct worthy the monarch of a free and great people. In Ireland, impelled by James, he took the worst measures, and by grossly favouring the Catholic party, which he deemed subservient to his views, prepared the way for civil war. He attempted to destroy the just balance which ought to exist in that country, and to acquire partizans there at the expence and welfare of the empire.

The patriots rushed into the other extreme, and became sanguinary persecutors of men, vast numbers of whom had no fault but a difference of religion. These patriot leaders, once but too much admired, grew inquisitors in the state, and

condemned for religion, when they could find no other crime in their fellow-citizens. Ireland, essentially Catholic,—credulous, and too full of vindictive passions to be guided by reason,—was thus fitted as an arena of discord by king and patriots. Each had his adherents,—by each were they pushed to extremes,—by each were terms confounded;—Catholic religion was taken for arbitrary power, and Protestant faith for republicanism. How much did such a scene suit the Machiavelian policy of France! Can we possibly tell, my dear L., whether to blame king or patriots most? Must we not pity, however we blame, this unfortunate island, which had already suffered a great deal by the same practices in the reign of Charles's father? The empire was already convulsed,—France looked malignantly on,—Charles seemed to waver. He died suddenly, not without strong appearance of poison.

At such a period, James the Second came to the throne. This man had all the faults of a tyrant, and none of the qualities of a great prince. Narrow, bigotted to the Catholic faith, with a most perverted and corrupt accommodation of religion to his own baseness,—never to be depended on, but when cowardice made him sincere,—vain of talents which were of the lowest order,—sanguinary, where he could venture,—mean whenever danger approached,—willing to

have set up any religion that seemed to him to favor despotic power,—ready to be a Tiberius, if a Sejanus and pretorian guards had been near to support him,—moved as a puppet by priests of great zeal and little understanding, when he thought himself most supreme and uncontrolled. This man attempted to subvert the glorious constitution of England, and govern it like a petty and emasculated Italian state. Then true patriotism raised her voice, expelled this unworthy king; and, in William and James's daughter, preserved the hereditary line, the constitution, and the empire.

James had, in his short reign, done enough to complete the misery of Ireland. With a frantic hand, he had overset the whole labours of England, since the time of Henry the Second. The Irish, blinded by their passions, saw not the abyss he was preparing for them, or rather hoped to profit by the divisions and weakness of England, and through the means of this infatuated king, eject their neighbours, friends, and relations of English race, long settled amongst them, who had improved their country and themselves, —who felt Ireland to be their common country too,—and who knew, if all settlers and invaders were to be denied a right to inhabit it, that the Irish themselves fell within the proscription.

Property, so often, and so cruelly unsettled, was again to be unhinged; and the innocent,—

the unjust,—the most amiable, as well as those rapacious or severe,—all were to be cast forth on a distant and unfeeling world. It is most melancholy to reflect, but historic justice pronounces the truth,—that religious prejudice entered into this cruel plan,—the religion of Christ,—admonishing men "to love one another," and "visit the fatherless and widow in their afflic-"tion!"

It is to be feared, that the Irish Catholics of that day despised, and were insincere to James, whilst they made use of the sanction of his royal authority; and he, on the other part, clearly, both disliked and held the Irish in contempt, but endeavoured to make them a stepping-stone to recover his authority in England. With such motives, as some of the violent party of the Catholics seem to have had, they never could, and ought not to have succeeded. With those the king entertained, he deserved the signal overthrow and lasting disgrace he met. In either, or any case of success, Ireland must have become the slave of France, and the scene of future bloody wars.

James, who, on the English throne, had begged for money from the French ambassador, with tears in his eyes, was not at all likely, when a fugitive, and going desperate to a nation he contemned, to retain any sentiment of decent or even outward independence. Accordingly, on

landing in Ireland, and holding a parliament where the whole Protestants of the country were proscribed, he seems the double instrument of the malice and bigotry of Louis the Fourteenth. This monarch abhorred in William, the defender of the liberties of Holland, of the continent, and now of England. He was a prince of a very narrow intellect, but of great activity and ambition,—bigotted and despotic in the extreme,—hating and persecuting genius, if not subservient to his will,—and quite unprincipled as to any means he pursued to attain an end. Having imagined himself a great man, he endeavoured to sustain the part, by trampling down Europe. In William he found a determined opposer.

The divisions of England had given Louis a sort of false strength; but his fraudulent policy, weak as it was vile, had terminated, by causing the expulsion of James, and the male line of the Stuarts. He clung to the hope of repairing things in Ireland, and sent the unhappy James there to perpetuate discord and perplex William. Accordingly, the abject king made the French ambassador, D'Avaux, a privy-councillor, and undertook nothing without his permission. In his speech from the throne, he had the folly and meanness to acknowledge his obligations to the French king, and praise, in warm terms, his foreign ally and master.

It is plain that James came over to Ireland in

an ill temper, which he probably carried from England to France on his ejection. His intellects needed not that great disadvantage to man in public affairs. This is quite obvious, and may partly account for his excessive impolicy, cruelty, and persecution, in addition to his natural bias, and the orders of Louis.

Although James, at first, with an affectation of heroism which suited him not better than Mambrino's helmet did a celebrated character, had refused any troops from the French king, he was soon glad to accept of them; yet, when they arrived, they and their commander treated this self-degraded king with no respect, and clearly shewed they came to conquer for France. Without abilities,—without means,—without confidence in the people he came to induce to shed their blood, and risk every thing for him, James, with the cowardice of a degraded tyrant, was meditating flight before he fought a battle. He had not dared to attack the brave Schomberg, though his army had suffered to extremity by the climate and sickness; and, on hearing of William's arrival and approach, he betrayed in council the darkest duplicity and the most extreme folly. Perhaps he wished to involve the Irish in the war, and, having lighted the flame, to abandon them; or his vanity led him, on quitting the stage of royalty, to make some shew of magnanimity. Be it as it may, on hearing of

William's march, he left Dublin, contrary to the most prudent opinions, and joined his army, now fallen back near Drogheda, on the Boyne. With 33,000 men, Irish and auxiliaries, he was posted near Oldbridge, on that river, when his son-in-law, at the head of 36,000 men, also Irish and auxiliaries, arrived on the opposite bank.

William was one of those truly great men who are born to save nations, not to destroy them. Calm, modest, and even reserved, he sought not admiration, and was free from every species of ostentation. A good soldier, a provident and active general, a faithful friend, without religious prejudice or acrimony of any sort; there was a sublime composure in his mind and manner, quite above vulgar intemperance, and scarcely mortal; and William, in his early defence of Holland,—in all his struggles for the liberty of Europe, and in finally emancipating this empire from an odious impending tyranny, was, to the end of his career, the friend of man, and the upright guardian of his subjects. He had now a painful but necessary duty to perform: he must meet James in the field, and one day might deprive his excellent consort of a father and a husband!

To view the scene of this engagement, my dear L., has been the object of our long walk of yesterday and to-day! With what strong emotions, on descending a small declivity, did we open

on the noble Boyne,—the village of Oldbridge,—the opposite ground, the very field of battle, where James stood amongst his guards,—the ford where the English army crossed,—the spot where Schomberg, the Blucher of his day, fell,—where Walker, the heroic defender of Derry, received his wound, and expired,—where the cannon, treacherously pointed at William, and but too well-directed, was placed,—all appeared before us!—We paused a long time.

So well known are this battle and its results, that I need not detail them to you. Already you see the Boyne crossed,—and behold William, in every place, the active hero! Now his dormant fire kindles, and transports him through the thickest and hottest parts of the action, well seconded and supported by his valiant troops! James, torpid and pusillanimous, remains at Donore, till told he is in danger of being taken. He flies,—and surrenders empire and fame for ever!

The brave Irish, who with another leader had made a different day,—ashamed of the dastardly king,—after a hot conflict, and the loss of many lives, retreat, in good order, by Duleek. Shall I venture to conclude thus——

The battle has ceased, and the silence that reigns
Is more dreadful than all its uproar!
Ah! see how the valiant are spread on the plains,
As the flutter of life is no more!

The soft dews of evening lie cold on each head,
And those arms that were proudly display'd
In the struggle, repose on the moss-covered bed
Where the war-horse has dolefully stray'd.

Those eyes, that were yesterday sparkling with life,
Are fix'd with the dull glare of death;
And the passions that reign'd through the torturing strife,
Yet are speaking,—though gone is that breath.

Alas! shall the sun of to-morrow behold
All this verdure besprinkled with gore?
Shall these generous bosoms for ever be cold,
And throb on that morrow no more?

Thy soft wave, oh, Boyne! is yet redden'd with blood,
And glares in the twilight's last ray;
Sad fragments deform thy late unspotted flood,
And around thee thy dark eddies play.

Now dark grows the night!—Oh, Moon, shroud thy beams!
Long be hidden those horrors from view;—
And Morn, if thou canst, let thy tremulous gleams
Kiss slowly the blood-mingled dew!

Oh, Discord! how mournful the glory that's thine,
When brothers—unkindly oppos'd,—
Thus warring,—destroy ev'ry patriot design;
Thus lie,—when the battle is closed!

How charming was the evening-scene at the Boyne! though somewhat saddened by these thoughts. The golden sun shed a mellow lustre on the river,—the trees,—the equestrian statue of the hero William,—and the distant landscape, spreading to Drogheda. We reluctantly left it,

visiting, on our return, Douth, the noble and very beautiful seat and demesne of Lord Netterville, a venerable Catholic nobleman, and arrived at an excellent inn here, to a good dinner and welcome repose.

Believe me, &c.

LETTER IV.

Dublin, Nov. 3, 1814.

MY DEAR L.

ANXIOUS to reach Dublin, and to complete our excursion soon, we arose before day. Our preparations for departure were easily made. The pedestrian depends on few besides himself. As the twilight wrapt the castle and woods of Slane in awful obscurity, and almost totally shrouded the beauties of the Boyne from our sight, we crossed the bridge of Slane. The twilight has its own peculiar charms,—the obscurity of every object, and the silence everywhere (unless the murmur of a river break it), are awfully pleasing. It is a moment which writers on the sublime might study with advantage. The dim gleam which seems to hover over twilight scenery, well exemplifies the expression of the prince of English poets, of "darkness "visible." We have a painful feeling, as if existence were vibrating on the very globe,

and eternity opening its vast bosom to man! By slow degrees, the dawn breaks,—the loud cock is heard: then the stealing smoke of the lowly cottage, and the patient step of rural industry appear!

We proceeded some miles from Slane before the sun arose. A great fog was spread everywhere, and his beams with great difficulty penetrated it; nor till several hours elapsed did nature gain its usual cheerful look. Conversation on the battle naturally engrossed us; for, among the many advantages of walking, it is one, that we seize the best moments for contemplation or communication of idea. You have encouraged me to proceed with historical disquisition, and say it renders Ireland more interesting, and her past story likely to be really useful. I shall follow the plan; and, indeed, think myself, that if we do not travel historically when we go forth from home, it is scarcely worth our pains to go abroad. You will then accompany us with the victorious hero of yesterday; and the examination of his progress and conduct, as we pass along a dreary road, will shorten the way. I sometimes fancy you with us as we converse, and, in general, I pretty faithfully transmit to you the conversations and ideas that arise.

William, without delay, proceeded to Dublin, and encamped near it. James had precipitately fled to Waterford, where a vessel, prepared by

his orders, before he left Dublin for his army on the Boyne, was ready. Without the smallest remorse, he abandoned a gallant but deluded people, who had risked so much for him. He did not attempt to make any terms for them. The tyrant feels but for self. Hence, in disaster and reverse, he always flies. He is sure of no friend; he has none, nor does he deserve any. Looking on men as mere instruments of his will, he regrets their loss, when they are destroyed, merely for the frustration of his purpose. When an army is broken and dissolved, he thinks not of the citizens of the state who remain; there is no sympathy between him and them; he must find another army,—other instruments,—or his "occupation" is gone.

James appears to have ill-naturedly prejudged the Irish, and to have himself been glad of an excuse for running away. In Dublin he exclaimed against their cowardice, and received the reprimand he deserved. In France he endeavoured to cast the imputation on them, but their character in that respect stood high. Their prudence may often be doubted, but the valour of the Irish stands on the basis of immemorial record; James thus added falsehood to his base desertion.

Happy had it been for this unfortunate island, if William, now unshackled by the presence of the late king, could have followed the bent of

his own benevolent and wise mind. A general amnesty, and a judicious re-consideration of the Act of Settlement, would have instantly conciliated to a hero, whom they naturally admired as much as they despised his dastardly rival; the whole island would have armed him with formidable power against France. The further attempts of Louis the Fourteenth in Ireland would at once have been ended, the French army still remaining expelled. It is most painful to say, that interested party prevailed with the new king. A proclamation was published by him, pardoning the lower classes, but proscribing, without exception, the gentry who had sided with James, the hereditary, and by many still considered the lawful, sovereign of England. Such a pardon might better have been styled a proclamation in favour of France. The sordid idea of forfeitures, unworthy such a king as William to countenance, seems to have prevailed in the party now victorious; and, blinded by its influence, they risked the empire for its gratification. Never would a king have appeared to more advantage than William, by a contrary conduct.

A violent party, and a bigotted monarch, had led the Irish far astray. The bulk of the people were innocent, and not hostile to William. That party had been chastised; that bigotted monarch had pusillanimously resigned his crown and fled. The interest of the empire strongly demanded

reconciliation and peace in Ireland. The interest of party required the continuation of civil war. They prevailed. The laurels of the Boyne were tarnished by the mean and vindictive persecution of a whole nation, and William cast away the best fruits of his labours and his victory in Ireland, when they invited his hand to gather them. The Irish now rallied in despair round the standard of France.

The war was revived in a more dangerous manner, and the flight of James was soon perceived to be a great advantage to the cause of Louis. Such, my dear L., is the miserable effect of the sordid passions of avarice and revenge mingling with the administration of public affairs! Whilst James and a most intemperate and blind faction reigned, the greatest horrors were threatened. The total want of understanding and policy in that king, and his Irish ministry and advisers (as well as of humanity,) make their measures, however revolting and intolerable, not to be surprizing. But that William, the generous vindicator of liberty in Holland, should permit the despotism of a party to set itself up in Ireland, and torture and manacle the whole community before his eyes, is quite melancholy! Since Henry the Second, no English king had done so much good there—by one blow he had terminated civil war!—and, having acted the victorious hero, the more glorious cha-

racter of legislator and pacificator was wanting to crown his fame. But, like Henry, he was involved and interested in continental affairs; like him, he was surrounded by interested and rapacious men; and, like him, he neglected the solid internal good of our great empire, for foreign and too-extended views! I am sorry to add, that, like Henry, he possessed little happiness or tranquillity on the throne of England. From the time he landed at Torbay to the last hours of existence, he was the minister of great public good, but the slave and almost victim of party. Unlike him, however, in domestic life, his noble-minded and faithful consort diminished, as much as possible, every care; and, during his stay in Ireland, guarded against France, and provided for her husband's safety, as the guardian and protecting angel of both! William, after issuing his declaration, (the bitter consequences of which he was soon to feel,) divided his army, and sent General Douglas to the west to besiege Athlone, where his own presence, in a conciliating manner, would have gained all Connaught. He himself proceeded to the eastern and southern parts, where he met little opposition.

The great body of the Irish, so much harassed since the reign of Henry the Eighth, saw in this new monarch a spirit of equity, and all the magnanimity of a real hero. They adored his dauntless valour, and were disgusted with French

insolence. His army under his eye preserved good discipline, and the great want of the presence of an active and benevolent king was in part fulfilled. Whatever depended on William himself was beneficial, just, and tolerant. But his western army treated Ireland as a conquered and rebellious country. The peasantry were shamefully and cruelly used, and the king's authority and example little respected. Douglas suffered a most disgraceful repulse at Athlone, and war assumed a most serious aspect on the Shannon, from the preparations made by the French, and the desperate valour of Irish gentlemen, and soldiers, driven against their will to join them and defend their honor, their properties, and their lives! We shall, I hope, visit that Shannon, my dear L., so much admired as the noblest of rivers, and, through William's fatal declaration, formerly made the theatre of a sanguinary and far from inglorious struggle!

You like these historical paintings, and if our wanderings carry us next year to the west, which I very much desire to see, you shall be supplied with more of them. We must now proceed on our way.

This country, from its vicinity to Dublin, and the goodness of the market for the sale of the produce of land, has afforded peculiar temptation to land-jobbers, and the small ancient farmers are either disappearing, or involved in absolute po-

verty. Amongst those speculators, however, failures are now frequent.

The proper remedy of moderate rents may bring things more to their natural level; but, I fear, numbers of these old farmers' families are quite ruined, and can never resume their station or lands. Agriculture may in time recover itself; but the tremendous debt which oppresses the state, and exacts its full annual interest, makes its struggle a most severe one. We had an opportunity on the road, to-day, of observing a very old custom amongst the Irish, which surprized us, as being so near the metropolis. We met a funeral, attended by a great number of country people. They were orderly, extremely clean, and well dressed. All the women wore bright-red cloaks. A select party followed the corpse, and sung the Irish lament in a very impressive, and far from unpleasing, manner; sometimes the tones were very low, and then rose as if in excess of grief. All was slow, solemn, and dirge-like. The women all followed the mourners, then the old and young men in separate bands, and, finally, a compact party of horsemen, well dressed and respectably mounted, closed the procession! At a distance the scarlet cloaks, and horsemen behind, with the wailing-cry indistinctly heard, made a singular impression on us. When the procession was passing, we could not but admire the great decency,

(which, indeed, the Irish observe at all religious ceremonies,) composed demeanour, and remarkable regularity, which were manifested by this concourse of affectionate and pious people! Where customs are entwined with nature, it is impossible, and very unwise to attempt, to root them out. This funeral-dirge is retained in every part of Ireland. Nothing, I apprehend, is more ancient in the world; and surely, for that alone, it is venerable. What can be more pathetic than to behold friends, relatives, and neighbours, in simple rural garb and religious procession, accompany the dead to the grave, as the farewell cry of grief is heard with solemn attention! Prejudice may deem a people barbarous, though they are exactly the reverse. But nature is a sure guide, and when we see them following her pure dictates in their simple way, and with affecting propriety, ought they not to be respected? —not ridiculed, or insulted!

In the very territory of Hugh de Lacy, one of the first great English nobles and adventurers, we find the oldest customs of the Irish prevalent and flourishing, whilst this proud lord and all his bands are forgotten, and little traces of his dominion exist. Hence conquerors and settlers may learn the useful lesson—that force may do much, but nature will ever assert her rights, and do more!

This day we saw many fine places—Sir Marcus Sommerville's, Sir Charles Dillon's, and others. Meath is certainly a noble county, and, in many parts, resembles the finest spots in England. They complain much of the burthen of tithes, but not with so much reason as in other places in Ireland. All this you will thoroughly understand soon, if you fulfil your intention of residing in this country, and will forget, for a little, all the advantages and comforts of England, in alleviating the misery around you. You can pity, without despising, the Irish nation, and with that true magnanimity, which I have ever perceived in well-educated gentlemen, be often more indulgent to their errors and faults than their own resident gentry. As our way inclined near Killeen-castle by the circuitous route we had taken, and we proposed to rest at Dunshaughlin, I took the opportunity, which might never again occur, of calling on Lord Fingall at his country resisidence. You, my dear L., know the urbanity and unclouded understanding of this worthy nobleman. Esteemed by all parties, possessing a fine hereditary fortune in Ireland, and an ancient earldom, he yet finds himself excluded from the privileges of the constitution, and of his rank, and consigned to total obscurity in an empire of which he is calculated to be, in his proper place, an ornament and support. Perfectly liberal, and

of very enlarged views for the welfare and grandeur of this empire, he finds himself treated as an alien and suspected man, because his religion differs from the king's, and he adheres to the faith of his ancestors in Ireland! Independent of the very great and sincere regard I entertain for the Earl of Fingall, I should think this a very hard case, if pointed out to me as a mere traveller in this island. I should be inclined to ask if former restrictions were necessary! have not the times and the state of Europe totally altered? —Is it the papal power, (which is rather become the ally of England,) or some new and hidden enemy, which threaten the English constitution, perhaps, with mistaken strictness, denominated Protestant? Does not England owe a long arrear to Ireland, and will she not rather anticipate and preclude future convulsions by a benignant alliance with all her people, than vainly endeavour to perpetrate the degradation of so many excellent and enlightened subjects?

My reflections were stopped by the proximity of Killeen-castle. It is a very noble building, repaired, improved, and almost re-built by the present noble possessor. It stands on the side of a fine vale, and has a grand and commanding appearance. I found Lord Fingall at home, and busied with the internal improvements of the castle. He has very happily succeeded in pre-

serving the best gothic style, united to every degree of modern elegance and grandeur! After partaking of some refreshment, we had a long and pleasing conversation. In Lord Fingall none of the acrimony of party exists. His mind is finely harmonized, and one vulgar vindictive thought never appears to have dwelt in his breast. He spoke with that profound respect for the legislature, and that degree of patient forbearance, under his privations, which marked the dignity of his mind, and the propriety of all his conceptions. Respecting a high quarter, where the most pleasing hopes had once fixed themselves, his lordship was silent. None could grieve more heartily than I, my dear L., to think that such silence conveyed much, and that, after the glorious termination of our foreign war, this gallant and highly-endowed people should sit unnoticed at the steps of the throne, and their sighs be disregarded.

I left this amiable nobleman's castle with regret. He accompanied me through a pleasant and shady walk, leading to a gate which opened on the road. His lordship has been at great expence in new-modelling and building so much of Killeen-castle; and he spoke on our way with great feeling of the disheartening thing it was to live in Ireland, deprived of all privilege, as he was. Such a resident

nobleman's patriotism is unquestionably of high merit.

On our way to Dublin, nothing farther of an interesting nature presented itself. In a year or two I hope to be able to send you some letters from Connaught, a county we are very desirous of seeing.

I am, very truly, yours, &c.

[*The pedestrian Tour through Connaught, which follows, afforded great satisfaction to the Author, and he does not conceive himself to have over-rated that most truly interesting part of Ireland. The Reader will find the price of labour lower there than in any other of its four provinces. He will easily infer, that very great numbers in it must enjoy but a small portion of the comforts of life, and many scarcely the necessaries! In fact, the state of the labouring class, in most parts of the south and west of Ireland, is so wretched at present, from the high price of food, inadequate value of labour, and many other depressing circumstances, that their existence is felt as a burthen rather than a blessing. Their situation calls aloud on the wisdom and humanity of landlords, as well as government and parliament.*]

WALKS

THROUGH

IRELAND

IN

1812, 1814, AND 1817.

THIRD WALK,

THROUGH MUNSTER AND CONNAUGHT, IN 1817.

LETTER I.

Cork, February, 1817.

MY DEAR L.

It is impossible for an Irishman, reflecting on the history of his country, to approach her shores without mixed sensations of sorrow and joy. One may have valued friends to re-visit, and new and beautiful scenes to observe; but the recollections of past days are dark and unsatisfactory. Such thoughts occurred as we arrived nearer the coast of Munster. The approach, by the harbour of the Cove of Cork, is strikingly beautiful.

Our passage from Devonshire had been speedy and pleasant, and the morning sun gilded the gently agitated waves as we discovered the entrance, which is narrow. As we passed through, the bay spread before our eyes in one great sheet of water, resembling a fine lake, sur-

rounded on all sides by ornamented and diversified grounds, chequered by islands, and varied by promontories. Numerous vessels coming out glided past us, as their sails brightened in the light of early day, and the cheerful and friendly hail was often repeated to the worthy captain of our packet.

We shortly saw many fishing-boats, and the hardy sons of Erin plying the oar, or adjusting the sail with that easy air peculiar to them, even in situations of danger. As we advanced with gentle course, the noble mansion and woods of Roctellan (the seat of the Marquis of Thomond, of the once royal house of O'Brien), came in view; it reposes majestically on the water-edge. Every moment new beauties were disclosed—Fine country-seats are scattered profusely to right and left, and far-penetrating inlets of this enchanting bay are continually lost in groves, meadows, and improvements!

Having left some islands and other fortified places behind, we passed the town of Cove, pleasantly situated on a declivity sweeping to the sea, and making a respectable and handsome appearance. The Tonnant man-of-war and many vessels lay at anchor there. From thence the bay narrows to a beautiful river, and conducts vessels to Cork, through scenes of increasing beauty. Passage is a neat and improving town, on the left. Pleasant villas every where meet

the eye; but, even thus passing swiftly through so much natural and improved beauty, the radical misery of the country pains the eye, as the most wretched cottages sprinkle the unimproved fields, and proclaim the mass of the people in these parts to be ill at ease. In the distance Cork makes a very grand appearance; its buildings, spires, and shipping, very happily crown a scene full of variegated charms. Woods and vallies thicken around, till, approaching the city, you perceive along its avenues the carts, carriages, and passengers, which mark the opulence and industry of a great commercial mart.

We had crossed over in the Wellington-packet, which afforded extremely good accommodation, (as all these packets do), and left our captain with the sincere regret his kind and exemplary conduct excited.

Cork is very large, and contains about one hundred thousand inhabitants. The people are mild and hospitable, and there is a great deal of elegance, literary talent, and learning, in Cork. Parts of the city are extremely handsome, and their insular nature, surrounded as they are by the divided Lee, makes them at once very cheerful and salubrious. Most of the environs of Cork are eminently beautiful; no city in the world enjoys more charming walks or rides in its neighbourhood. Add to this, the universal urbanity and politeness which is met from the highest

charitable,) in Cork,—to point out many highly-endowed characters,—and to dwell on the remarkable benevolence and charity shewn there these last two deplorable years, I must write volumes, a history of Cork, not a tour through Connaught. Besides, a modern and elegant production of the Rev. Mr. Townsend, on the county of Cork, renders it superfluous. His work is pleasing, and very instructive, doing great credit to his feelings and understanding. We have made several minor excursions, but that respected character's excellent book makes particular descriptions of several parts of the county and neighbourhood of this city needless.

Dr. Smith's history of the county of Cork, though not so pleasing a work as Mr. Townsend's, is also well worthy the traveller's perusal, and is marked by great research and erudition. However, I shall mention some historic particulars relating to this city which may interest you, and shall recur at first to those early times which engaged our attention on our Wexford tour.

On Henry the Second's arrival at Waterford, we have seen that Cork was the first principality in Ireland which submitted to him. All the southern parts paid him this degree of nominal respect, and their kings, at least, judged it politic to bend to a power they could not resist, which was a thing that their ill-constructed despotisms rendered them incapable of doing with

any effect. Nothing could be more fallacious, nevertheless, than this submission. No part of Ireland felt more sensibly the defects of Henry's transitory policy than Munster. The rights of the people were here long left the sport of arbitrary feudal power, and when a bad system for correcting it was applied under the successive kings who succeeded Henry the Second (but peculiarly in the reigns of Henry the Eighth, and of the renowned Elizabeth), a deluge of blood covered the fair plains through which we are going to pass; a dreadful conflict of interests, of passions, and of arms arose. In this city, Robert Fitzstephens, whose first steps on the sands of the beach at Bag and Bun we traced with a sort of pious enthusiasm, breathed his last. No tomb covers his honored remains! His exploit merited one, and a more fortunate end.

Fitzstephens had been removed from Wexford to Dublin, and from thence to Cork, as the suspicions of Henry the Second and his ministers operated; and successively, but ungenerously, placed in the most exposed and unimproved situations, far from his original possessions! In or near Cork he spent his latter days; and, by social intercourse, endeavoured to conciliate the native inhabitants. He placed unbounded confidence in them, and seemed to have secured their esteem and affections. The death of a favourite

son had cast a gloom over him, but another blow overwhelmed him altogether.

His surviving son had married the daughter of Miles de Cogan, and both had repaired on their way to meet some of the citizens of Waterford, near Lismore, to the house of a person named M'Tire. He was the friend of Fitzstephens, and of Cogan. But he turned his hospitable invitation to the detestable purpose of assassination, murdered his guests, and then boasted to his countrymen of the atrocious deed. Robert Fitzstephens heard it, and wept. However, he prepared bravely for a siege in Cork. Raymond le Gros sent him succours from Wexford, and the city was relieved. But exhausted, and too severely tried, nature yielded soon after, and the gallant old hero grew insane! Death was, in some time, a happy termination to such miseries. No pen can too strongly reprobate such treachery. It sows the seeds of lasting alienation and discord, and converts a whole country into a scene of suspicion and cruelty. It must surely grieve any right-thinking mind to reflect, that he who deserved the repose and honors of a Timoleon, was thus treated in the persons of his family and himself, and thus immolated through the coarseness of blind and sordid revenge, in the evening of his days! A different conduct in his sovereign had not placed him in such danger.

In the reign of Henry the Seventh, this city shewed much credulity in favour of pretenders to the throne, but the contests of the houses of York and Lancaster had divided the whole empire; and Ireland, in adhering to the Duke of York and his descendants, evinced the virtues of gratitude and constancy in the highest degree. In taking a short excursion with us to Kinsale, which is a neat old town, containing a population of five or six thousand souls, on the sea-side, twelve miles from this, you will be better enabled to enter into the history of those times which followed the reign of Henry the Seventh, and most powerfully influenced the fate and fortunes of Munster.

Since the accession of Henry the Eighth, it had been regulated by a lord-president, and several able and vigilant men had governed it with considerable success. That monarch's imperious and short-sighted politics at home and abroad, placed his illustrious daughter Elizabeth in a very dangerous position, and left her but a choice of evils. Not venturing to offend a Protestant party in England and Europe, she alienated her Catholic subjects in Ireland from the British throne. The Pope, and King of Spain, under the name of religion, did not fail to inflame a credulous and oppressed nation; and, under the mask of compassion, heightened by piety, to seduce them from their allegiance to

that queen. Hence invasions in Munster and Connaught were repeatedly threatened on one side, and invited on the other, during her whole reign, and several were put in execution with various success.

The rude violation of all that this people held sacred, by Henry the Eighth's and Elizabeth's governments, totally checked the improvement which might have been reckoned on upon the subsiding of civil war in England by the union of the red and white roses, created new disorders in this part of the empire, and nearly severed Ireland from England for ever. Munster and Connaught became the scenes of intrigue between misguided and unfortunate Ireland, and the courts of Rome and Madrid. In the latter end of Elizabeth's perturbed reign, the Earls of Tyrone and Tyrconnel had negociated with Spain for her assistance, and in September, 1601, a Spanish force arrived at and seized Kinsale.

Although many Catholic ecclesiastics, under the influence of resentment and of papal intrigue, animated the people to receive the foreigners, Munster shewed small disposition to do so. The northern earls hastened with their irregular army to join Don J. D'Aguilar at Kinsale. The deputy, Lord Mountjoy, hurried to attack him with a small and ill-appointed army. We beheld that ancient and respectable town with strong feelings. The harbour of Kinsale is a very beau-

tiful and commodious one, and has often seen the foreign fleets of the invader. The Spanish forces landed without opposition in 1601.

The queen was then feeble, ill, and melancholy, through satiety of the world, and regret for Essex! Her councils were no longer vigorous; and nothing but the fortitude and spirit of so excellent a lord-deputy as Mountjoy, aided by Sir James Carew, president of Munster, a man not less intelligent and brave, could have attempted the prompt resistance to the Spaniards and the northern earls which the extremity of the case required. They besieged Kinsale. Tyrconnel had pierced into Leinster, and Tyrone followed. Sir James Carew left the deputy to meet the former, but was evaded by the active chieftain, who marched his men across the mountains in the midst of a severe frost, and in this way, by a military exploit, worthy of Roman courage, and in an unexpected part, pierced into Munster, where Tyrone shortly made a junction with him.

Some reinforcements from government, and from some well-inclined lords, reached the deputy; but six ships of the line, of Spain also, had landed two thousand men on the coast, and the united armies of the earls shut the English army between themselves and Kinsale.

Judge, my dear L., how one must feel at viewing all this interesting scene from an eminence

above Kinsale; the town,—the bay,—and the site of the English camp! You will also recollect, that King James landed here in 1688, on his ill-omened expedition! The Spaniards not only made a brave defence, but many vigorous sallies. At this moment, patience and perseverance were only wanting to annihilate the English troops. Fresh reinforcements from Spain would have poured in. The inhabitants of Ireland were annihilated from the English crown by a violation of all they held dear. The queen was dying, and her successor neither warlike nor sagacious.

It is said that the Spanish commander impatiently and injudiciously urged Tyrone, against his own judgment, to attack the lord-deputy. The event was fatal to him. His irregular troops were soon repulsed and fled, and O'Donnel's army, taking no part, joined in the general rout. The Spanish commander capitulated very soon after. Thus Kinsale was recovered, and the great northern chieftains completely baffled, through the want of prudence in the foreigners.

This most remarkable event happened not very long before Elizabeth's death, and crowned Lord Mountjoy and her arms in Ireland with glory, at a moment when she was very near experiencing, in her last moments, the bitterness of a defeat from Spain in her own dominions, and the loss of Ireland from her own impolicy. In the earlier part of her reign, Sir Walter Raleigh com-

manded in Cork, and his first military campaigns were made in Munster. How very painful to notice the putting to death in cold blood the foreigners at Smerwick Fort, in Kerry, by Sir Walter and party, under the orders of the severe Lord Grey! That blood yet stains the lustre of that accomplished warrior, statesman, and scholar's sword.

He resided chiefly at Youghall, and the house and apartments he inhabited remain very much in their antique state. I have beheld them with great veneration. The room in which Sir Walter slept, is still in great preservation; the old wainscoting, fire-place, and windows, are nearly as in his time. Mrs. Musgrave, who resides there, takes pleasure in preserving every thing in its ancient state as much as possible, and was exceedingly polite in permitting me to see the house. It is highly interesting. The ancient walls of Youghall enclose its venerable gardens, where some fine myrtles grow in the open air.

Believe me very sincerely, &c.

LETTER III.

Cork, July 5, 1817.

MY DEAR L.

YOUR remarks on the probable effects of the success of the gloomy tyrant of Spain in Ireland, if an officer of superior talent had commanded in Kinsale, and of the too certain introduction of the Inquisition there, are very just. Providence saved the island from the double impending tyranny. The government and people were nearly falling in one common ruin. Had the Spanish tyrant acquired this country then, doubtless an unrelenting conscription of all capable of bearing arms would have been made for invading England, or furthering his despotic and bloody views on the Continent.

I find nothing worthy of note in the siege of Cork by the Duke of Marlborough, to which you allude, but the death of the Duke of Grafton, son of Charles the Second, a very promising young nobleman. But, alas! my dear L., my attention is drawn from sieges to the melancholy and actual state of this city, under the pressure of famine and sickness! A fever of an infectious and alarming nature has begun to spread through Cork; and accounts reach us, that in other parts of the island its consequences have

been lamentable. A very excellent hospital is quite full here; and a temporary one, raised by the voluntary and active benevolence of the inhabitants of Cork, will also, I fear, be found too necessary. This has given us occasion for very serious consideration. The greatness and wretchedness of the population of Ireland are, in a manner, re-acting and exciting causes of fever; and history accordingly shews us, that this island has been frequently and heavily afflicted by it in various reigns of the English monarchs since the time of Henry the Second. Before that time, it is also, I believe, mentioned by historical records, as often occurring.

The apprehension of fever is not a desirable accompaniment on a pedestrian tour; but I feel by no means inclined, therefore, to give up our undertaking. We shall see this great community under a point of view, painful, but assuredly interesting to humanity to behold. Convinced as I am that the public health is a primary care of any government, I cannot, with satisfaction to my own mind, suspend our tour through personal considerations, but rather hold myself more excited to pursue it,—that if, through the prevalence of plague or fever in wild and remote parts (where the pedestrian alone can penetrate), much misery exists unknown and unremedied, some intimations may be given to government, and some good be done to this afflicted people! My

My companions are equally willing to undergo any risk, and we shall probably depart from this next week.

As a principal object of this tour is to examine the former residence of Edmund Spencer in this country, and to ascertain if any ruins or vestiges of his abode remain, we shall first direct our steps to Donneraile, near which village the poet dwelt for many years.

I shall now close this long letter, having endeavoured to prepare you for inspecting the venerable ruins of Kilcolmar. In idea, my dear L., you will accompany us there, and join us in paying homage at the shrine of one of England's oldest and noblest bards!

Believe me, &c. &c.

LETTER IV.

Rathcormuck and Donneraile, August 29 and 30, 1817.

MY DEAR L.

After more delay than we had calculated on in visiting the beauties of Cove, Passage, Monkstown, and several other beautiful places in the vicinity of Cork, we set out this morning on our great and long meditated walk.

The day was unfavourable; and we found the gloomiest apprehensions entertained by the farmers on the road. We were not without anxiety in setting forward, under all attending circumstances, on a journey, which may prove one of four or five hundred Irish miles, yet resolved to complete our projected plan.

As we approached Watergrass-hill, where a small village is placed, commanding a most extensive view, the farming appears pretty good, and the solitary look of the land within some miles of Cork, is exchanged for the pleasantness of rural life. Our way to Rathcormuck was marked by nothing interesting, till we came within a mile of it, when a beautiful and extensive landscape of river, village, mountains, and cultivated country, opened before us. All the gloomy ideas of the early part of our walk vanished. The evening was as charming as the morning had been the reverse. The declining sun gleamed forth over the reviving scenery of nature. We found a comfortable and pleasant inn on the river side, before we entered the village of Rathcormuck. Early in the morning we passed through it. It is a respectable place, adorned by several most tasteful and rural cottages. Adjoining it are the beautiful seats of Lord Riversdale and Mr. Devonshire.

We turned our steps towards Fermoy, and arrived there in an hour. It is one of the prettiest

towns in Ireland, and stands on the Blackwater river. This majestic stream, deservedly celebrated, and doubtless often visited by Spencer, flows through and divides the town. A handsome bridge connects the two parts. A noble mansion of Mr. Anderson's ornaments the scene.

This gentleman, who is of Scotland (a country full of ability, enterprize, and genius), has the merit of forming the town of Fermoy, which in neatness and elegance much surpasses those commonly seen in Ireland. We understood that some misfortune in trade caused him, between twenty and thirty years ago, to come to the south of Ireland. In Cork, he was successful in business, which he there recommenced with the small wreck of his former fortune. He removed to Fermoy, purchased land, and made contracts with government for building barracks, and establishing mail-coaches in Ireland. In time, Mr. Anderson set up a Bank, and prospered so much, as to be enabled to purchase the large estates of the Barrymore family, once part of the unfortunate Earl of Desmond's possessions.

Mr. Anderson's talents and integrity raised him to a high pinnacle of fortune and confidence in the country. In the rebellion of 1798, he is said never to have remitted in the progress of his works and buildings; but when his numerous tradesmen and labourers were inclined to pause, —some through fear,—others through inclina-

tion to yield to the general delusion, he came amongst them, and by very convincing arguments, proved he had money and inclination to continue all his undertakings. He added paternal advice to the men. None moved from their labours, and the lives of many were saved by this excellent man's wise and public-spirited conduct.

Mr. A. has formed Fermoy by a regular plan of a square, and various intersecting streets; and, combined with his own mansion, the Blackwater, and adjoining woods, it forms a very beautiful spectacle. A handsome church on one side the river, and a new and tasteful chapel on the other, mark the propriety and liberality of the founder of Fermoy.

I grieve to say, that the sudden fall of land has darkened the prospects of Mr. A., and compelled him to close his Bank. The too great emission of the paper of country-banks in Ireland had added to the velocity of the war-tide in Ireland. Mr. A.'s speculations had, however, all tended to the manifest improvement of Munster, and of Ireland generally. He had taught the people what could be done in their native land by industry, talent, and sobriety united, and long and well applied. The lesson was striking, and written in characters to be read by all.

We had the satisfaction of seeing Mr. Anderson at his house, whose unaffected manners and

intelligent conversation more than confirmed the high opinion we had entertained of him. He bears the reverse of his fortune with the dignity of a superior mind, and there is reason to hope his affairs may, in time, be tolerably re-established. The view from his windows up the Blackwater is quite charming. Many such men as Mr. A., blending, as he did, energy with conciliation, would long ago have rendered Ireland happy. Such a mind in the councils of Elizabeth had marked out the true plan of assimilating the two countries, and shewn how far preferable are the bonds of affection, affinity, and mutual convenience, to the crude restraints of a coercion, which thinks to mould the unerring laws of nature to its own little purposes.

The distress of the poor has been very great this summer at Fermoy. At Rathcormuck, also, has been most severe; but the exemplary exertions of the Hon. and Rev. Mr. Tonson, (a character whose residence in the country is a great advantage and blessing to the people,) and of other gentlemen, have there averted much of the evil; nor has Mr. A. been wanting to Fermoy. The gentry all around have been active and benevolent in a high degree, and the landholders seemed actuated by truly paternal feelings to the people.

I think, my dear L., that the introduction of the English race has been a more solid and

greater benefit to the Irish, than they suffer themselves to be aware of. It seems to me (generally speaking), that an Englishman uses power with more magnanimity and moderation than an Irishman. He admits the rights of men, in the inferior walks of life, with quiet dignity; and taught by his own admirable constitution to consider the laws as his guide, does not seek false and fictitious superiority over others! Hence the people themselves are found frequently to prefer masters and landlords of English extraction, incorporated in the nation, to those of the Irish and indigenous race.

We parted from Mr. Anderson, not without sensible regret. This worthy and excellent man declines in health, and the apprehension of the loss of this benefactor of the public, cannot fail to inspire mournful ideas. How different his from the conqueror's achievements! Round his mansion gladdened human nature smiles, and future generations shall reap his benefits!

Our walk to Donneraile led us along the Blackwater, and past the delightful places of Castle Hyde, one of the finest in Ireland, and of many gentlemen's seats scattered along this river. Convamore, the seat of the Hon. Mr. Hare, the amiable and respectable member for this county, seated on it, amidst wooded mountains, attracted our attention. We also passed an old ruin near

Bally Hooley, adding much to such picturesque views.

But the idea of Spencer was too predominant to allow us to delay on our way, and you know that looking at fine houses, which wealth produces every where, is no part of my plan. Bidding farewell to the Blackwater, which we now left behind us, we came in sight of the village and romantic castle of Castle Town Roche.

Passing down a gentle hill to enter the former, the ancient residence of the Lord Roches towered, amidst beautiful woods, on a high bank, whilst the Awbeg, or "Mulla," of Spencer, rolled through a small and verdant valley, close to our left. We beheld this enchanting stream with no feeble emotions. It well merits the eulogiums of the bard, accustomed to call it "Mulla Mine." —The sun brightened its pearly waters, as they gurgled over a pebbly course. A bridge conducts to the village, rising in a pleasing manner from it. The villagers were passing and re-passing; all was serene and cheerful! The magic of the scene was complete, as the distant Mulla crept through a fairy valley to this bridge. Edmund Spencer had a small estate near Castle Town Roche, and a lady of a most accomplished and benevolent mind, who occasionally resides near this, tells me she is convinced he had a residence here, as well as at Kilcolman

This I think highly probable, as the Mulla, the subject of his poetic admiration, appears here to the greatest advantage, and must have been to him an inducement and temptation of no ordinary kind. Spencer's estate of Renney, near this, was, till within a period not very remote, in the hands of one of his descendants. It is singular, that the chief part of his property was forfeited by another of his family, I believe a grandson, through attachment to the cause of the unhappy James the Second; and that Kilcolman, bestowed by Sir Walter Raleigh, (who received it from Queen Elizabeth) should fall again to the crown from the misconduct of a Spencer, which had formerly reverted to it through the errors of a Desmond!

The castle of Lord Roche was visited in a very unceremonious manner, we are told, on one occasion, by that great man Sir Walter Raleigh, long before Spencer obtained estates in these countries. He had a command in Cork; and, as in those turbulent times suspicion was too much the order of the day, received information of the disloyalty of Lord Roche and family.

He suddenly repaired to this castle with a strong party, and, after some shew of resistance from the alarmed villagers, succeeded in enforcing the opening of the castle-gates. It was now late in the evening. Lord and Lady Roche surprised, but not intimidated, received and entertained

Raleigh as well as they could upon so unceremonious a notice. They remonstrated upon the cruelty of thus invading their domestic quiet, and listening to the tales of the malevolent.

In vain Sir Walter Raleigh made both the noble Lord and his consort prisoners, and hurried them away, in a winter-night, to the city of Cork! There it soon appeared they were innocent of any offence against government.

How very degrading such a service to Raleigh! How melancholy such times, when forfeitures were hunted after with base avidity, and guilt was presumed with careless indifference as to the fate of, perhaps, very meritorious persons!—It was enough often to fix a stigma, to ruin a family!

In a subsequent period of turbulence, in 1649, a Lady Roche, of this family, defended this castle against the cannon of the parliament army.

To every traveller desirous of seeing Kilcolman, I should recommend first visiting Castle Town Roche, and the enchanting Mulla. Here he will find fairy and classic scenes; history, too, dips her pencil in the colouring of ancient times, and shews him Raleigh pouring down the neighbouring hill; the villagers running affrighted to defend their Lord; the castle surrendering, and the noble owners carried away in the midst of a scowling night! Then imagination will shew

him the far different, and more grateful sight of Spencer straying along his "Mulla," murmuring his sweet strains, or whiling his time by ensnaring the finny inhabitants of the sweet stream that bathed his feet! Having taken a slight refreshment at this lovely village, we proceeded to Donneraile.

The road improves the whole way; and the pedestrian journeying from Cork to Kilcolman by this route, is richly rewarded for his toil. Excellent cultivation of fine large and well-inclosed fields, plainly evinces a happy state of things, and the former hand of English agricultural improvement; good hedges and hedge-rows, orchards, and commodious farm-houses, with proper out-offices, delight the eye. The road becomes a fine avenue, with abundance of trees every where on its sides; and the now not very distant mountains of Ballyhowra, or, as Spencer frequently termed them, "the moun-"tains of the mole," spread in a fine amphitheatre in front and to the right, whilst the Galtus, bordering Cork and Limerick counties, proudly rise in the distance to the clouds.

As we advanced very near to Donneraile, our admiration was highly excited by the noble spread of Lord Donneraile's woods and grounds, the view of several handsome seats near the village, and by the pleasant windings of the Mulla through the far-spreading vale. Neither

in fertile and well-wooded England, or in any country, can a finer scene of rich rural beauty be exhibited.

Castle Saffron stands proudly in the valley, on the bank of the "Mulla," near Mr. Creagh's beautiful place; Kilbrach, the residence of Mr. Stawell, adorns its banks higher up, and Lord Donneraile's mansion and the village are embowered in the luxuriance of intervening groves. The "mountains of the Mole," seen in a still happier manner than at first, complete this inimitable landscape, and heighten its beauties by classic, and almost sublime recollections! The spirit of Spencer seemed to hover over them, or descending to roam through these noble woods, the fruit of the cares of no ignoble hands.

Sir William St. Ledger, Lord President of Munster, and ancestor of the present noble Lord, resided at Donneraile in the reigns of James and Charles the First. Sir Wareham St. Ledger had received from Queen Elizabeth large estates, part of them a portion of the forfeited possessions of the Earl of Desmond, and transmitted them to his family. He probably commenced these improvements, and left them to his posterity to complete.

Their common and illustrious ancestor, Sir Anthony St. Ledger, was Lord Deputy in the successive reigns of Henry the Eighth, Edward Sixth, and of Mary. Ireland never saw a more

intelligent or just one. His views were those of a great statesman, and his administration of Irish affairs, under great and various difficulties, far superior to that of the preceding, or succeeding ones. He served the crown of England faithfully, and followed the base passions of no party! Such a character gave safety to Ireland, and strength to England; neither fearing, nor unwisely irritating the former, nor giving bad councils to the latter. Sir Wareham was the companion in arms of Sir Walter Raleigh. Such a family well deserved rewards from the crown, and are far distinguished above many adventurers of that day, who advanced themselves in Ireland by cunning and ignoble means.

We arrived in Donneraile at a respectable, and very comfortable small inn, as the evening was advanced; but, having taken some refreshment, could not bear to delay visiting Kilcolman till morning. It is distant from Donneraile a mile and a-half, or two miles.

This village is neat and well-built, and charmingly placed on the Mulla. The ancient castle of the St. Ledgers stood near the bridge, but has been removed by the Donneraile family, who have built a commodious and handsome mansion-house close to the village. Our walk led us through a noble avenue of very fine trees, which, indeed, shelter and adorn this favoured spot in every direction, and make Lord Donneraile, in

more senses than one, the guardian of the cottages of the poor. Proceeding about half a mile, we turned to the left, and continuing our way by a pleasant winding road another half mile, we again turned to the right, and found ourselves in a right line to Kilcolman. We hastened our steps; the evening sun still lingered on the woods of Donneraile, the country, and adjacent mountains. In a few moments Kilcolman-castle, a ruin of considerable magnitude, resting in lonely grandeur on the side of a small lake, rose before our eyes. The last rays of the sun dressed the pile with that autumnal glow, that mellows into softened beauty the most rugged feature and barren field in nature. We stood transfixed to the spot many minutes. History unfurled her rich page before us; and the mind's-eye, with rapid glance, hurried over leading events of the glorious Elizabeth's reign, of which Edmund Spencer was the noblest ornament. "That ruined castle," said I, "once belonged to the haughty Earl of "Desmond, the lord of a great principality; but, "in his last hour, the wretched inmate of a poor "cottage! It was the residence for twelve years "of Edmund Spencer, England's bard, who ex-"celled Chaucer, and was the first great im-"prover of her language, as well as the rival of "the poets of Italy; but, expelled by the fero-"city of civil warfare, it is doubtful where he "expired."

We walked silently to the castle; we paid departed genius the sincere and mute homage of our hearts. The moment was a mixed one—painful, gratifying, and solemn! . . . . . The castle of Kilcolman, of which I send you a drawing, was once of very considerable extent, which the scattered fragments fully evince.

By grant from Queen Elizabeth, dated June 27th, 1586, Spencer obtained 3,028 acres in the county of Cork. The estimated annual value was £17 7*s.* 6*d.* This grant obliged him to cultivate the estate, and drew upon him the necessity of residing at Kilcolman.

In the ruins are the kitchen, staircase, and tower, still very perfect. The flooring of a large room above the kitchen, and several windows, are to be seen. The whole remaining shell of the building is of considerable size. One small closet and window, in the tower, we found quite perfect; from the stone-seat, yet untouched, I had a good view of the country. There I long sat alone; what exquisite moments! How full of the lonely melancholy that approximates to death, and yet links us tenderly to this mortal scene! In this tower, and this recess, has Spencer often studied and written! and, as I fancied this, the shades of evening gathered, and made the illusion stronger. We had not much time, however, to remain. I descended, and we walked

round the castle. Its situation is now bleak and cheerless.

The Ballyhowra mountains spread round, and the distant prospect is very extensive, but without trees. Kilcolman is but a melancholy emblem of the fortunes of both its possessors; of the forlorn and ruined Desmond; and of the, perhaps, more unhappy (because more refined) as well as unfortunate Spencer!

Formerly, tradition says, the woods of Kilcolman reached to Buttevant, three miles distant. It is likely, on the poet's abandoning the place, that great devastation was committed.

The lake is very much choaked up, and the "Mulla," which rises, I believe, near Liscarrol, in this county, and flows past Buttevant into it, emerges from it in a very humble manner.

It added to the interest of the whole scene to know, that the immortal Edmund Burke had more than once visited Kilcolman, and spent many hours at it. I believe alone, or with one companion only, in privacy he communed with the shade of the divine bard. His own was scarcely a less poetic mind than Spencer's, and, perhaps, rather toned for such pursuits as his, than for the warfare of party.

We returned to Donneraile, full of reverence and sorrow for Spencer! Having hazarded the thought, that his connection with Lord Grey, certainly a very cruel governor for Ireland, made

the bard less conciliating to the Irish, and his own situation unpleasing on that account, I pencilled these lines on leaving Kilcolman, and, enclosing them, end this long letter.

Yours truly, &c. &c.

ON KILCOLMAN, THE RESIDENCE OF SPENCER.

HERE wander'd the poet, when morning's grey dawn
Stole o'er the dark masses of mountains around,
And the far-speeding hare scarce touch'd the moist lawn,
Around by the fresh breeze's short rustling sound.

He mus'd on the scene for philosophy made!
And pensively wander'd the wild fields alone;
Then, striking his lyre in the leaf-cover'd shade,
Sung—far from his country—in Erin unknown.

He sought not her love, nor that poesy trac'd,
Which, enchantingly rich as his own sweetest lays,
The warrior had raptur'd—the palace had grac'd—
And gain'd from a nation the garland of praise!

He saw but a desert, and heard not the song
The bard of the mountain just murmur'd above;
He trembled at Erin's wild, wandering throng,
And felt not the pleasures of neighbourly love.

The gold rays of morning in vain dress'd the hill—
In vain flow'd his Mulla—suspicion destroy'd
The rural enjoyment, that trembl'd at ill,
And fear'd the fierce hand that it sought to avoid!

For the bard had not taught his own heart t' avoid
The lesson of lovely compassion to all!
The poet assum'd the hard warrior's part,
And smil'd at a generous, lost nation's fall!

Oh! had he but wept, the kind drops had been
The balm that had charm'd, as they sadden'd his soul,
With unchequer'd rapture had view'd the fair scene,
And heard, still delighted, his Mulla's soft roll!

LETTER V.

Donneraile, August 31, 1817.

MY DEAR L.

After our walks of yesterday, and the day preceding, we required some rest. We delayed here this day, and found great pleasure in exploring this neighbourhood.

Having heard that a picture of Edmund Spencer was at Saffron Hill, we attempted to see it, but failed, as it appeared it had been removed. The beautiful spot of Saffron Hill, however, repaid our trouble; it is a small villa adjoining Lord Donneraile's woods, and commands the most charming views.

We visited afterwards Castle Saffron, and Mr. Creagh Brazier's grounds, on the Mulla, who shewed us great civility, and we ended our excursion by a stroll through Donneraile-park. This very noble place contains several hundred acres of fine land, and venerable woods well enclosed, through which the Mulla gently flows. It is full of various beauties, and has a very happy mix-

ture of the antique English, or Flemish style, and the picturesque of nature. The mansion stands at the head of a very beautiful and extensive lawn. We admired very much a long regular piece of water, shaded by noble trees on one side, and losing itself in a distant grove. Along it a walk runs nearly a quarter of a mile, and is finely adapted for avoiding the heats of summer, and calmly contemplating on the beauties of nature, or past and present times. From the centre of it an avenue of venerable elms, arching above in the manner of the Gothic cathedral, leads to a walk winding beautifully to the house. The finest evergreens—the oak, the ash, and chesnut, blended their tints, in this autumnal season, in every walk, and gave heightened interest as we strayed along.

I could not but imagine the Lord President of Munster, Sir William St. Leger, gravely ruminating in these shades on the dark aspect of the times in which he lived, and mourning over the distractions of the state. On the breaking out of the rebellion, in 1641, this exalted character commanded in Munster, and, for a considerable time, with the assistance of the gentry and well-disposed part of the people, kept it tranquil. The machievelian policy of the republican and fanatic party, in England, did not permit a complete pacification of Ireland at this period; and the lords-justices, who were their creatures, too

faithfully fulfilled their wishes. The misguided and infatuated Irish too-well seconded these plans, by partial commotions; furnishing thereby the patriots of the day, in England, with fresh pretences for calumniating the king, and for raising money.

Ireland was made the watch-word of party, till Charles was finally overthrown. The true interests of the commonwealth were neglected by all,—by the king,—the republican,—and the Catholic party. Each sought a particular end; and had a Philip the Second then reigned in Europe, in the plenitude of his tyranny, the empire might have been ruined.

Our history in Ireland, my dear L., is so enveloped in pernicious obscurity, that the lessons it might have yielded to modern times, have been too much lost, and the characters which would have done honor to Roman times, have been almost sunk in oblivion. The intemperate and unfair cry of party on each side in Ireland, has left posterity at a loss which to approve, or which to condemn. The truest friends to monarchy and the constitution in the empire have been merged in the chaos of Charles's unhappy reign in Ireland; and their names obscured by those mists which then overspread the land.

Such a character was Sir William St. Leger, Lord-president of Munster in 1642. Firm, intrepid, and contemplative,—a brave soldier, and

wise governor, he viewed danger calmly, and provided against it timorously. When the deplorable explosion of 1641 had somewhat evaporated, he hoped to preserve Munster from the horrors of civil commotion. He was the friend to the crown and the people. Discord and internal war in Ireland served the purposes of a party,—the enemy to both. The government at Dublin denied him arms and men. Left to his own resources, this great man checked all dispositions to rebel by strictness, which the public safety required. As the military and civil governor of this province, entrusted with its care by the crown, he fulfilled his high duties, even when abandoned by government.

If the madness of party had permitted him, St. Leger had preserved this fine country from misery and devastation! His powerful mind made an effort for humanity which does him lasting honor. To prevent, rather than punish rebellion, was his aim. But the pent-up tempest broke upon his head. The Irish, aroused by artful and violent leaders, and rendered irritable by the oppression and insults of a bad and persecuting system, rushed to arms in many parts of Munster. The president, undismayed, prepared for every thing,—gave way where he could not resist, and garrisoned where he knew the best stands could be made. Finally, compelled to shut himself and his forces in Cork,—besieged

by rebels,—and deserted by government,—he held out to the empire the noble example of a brave man following the path of duty in the midst of increasing dangers, and without one of those ordinary inducements which sway and animate ordinary minds.

But his feelings grew too painful; ingratitude, which gnaws with serpent's tooth,—ingratitude from his country and king preyed on him! His magnanimity never deserted him, but his mortal frame sunk under the struggle;—Sir William St. Leger died of a broken heart, when he perceived all prospect was lost of saving that state he was sworn to defend.

Perhaps, my dear L., we have very few finer instances in history of high honor and unperverted principles in any great man. St. Leger might have had any terms he pleased from the parliament of England,—he might have obtained a principality from the Catholics of Ireland;—he bowed to neither. His conceptions of the constitution of the empire were very different from what either entertained. He made no speeches,—but he acted. He sought or required no power or emolument at the expence of public good. He did not temporize, like Ormond, till he made bad worse, but shewed all men their real duty, and died in performance of his!

You will pardon this historic digression in the shades of Donneraile-park, where this great man

has often mused, and where he may have planned many things for the benefit of a deluded people. Indeed, the whole vicinity of Donneraile betokens the plans of a great mind. Nowhere have we seen more distinctly imprinted, the vast advantages of English improvement and friendly alliance than here. This favourite spot is better cultivated,—is more inhabited by resident gentry, —and the condition of the people in its whole neighbourhood is happier than in any we have beheld in Ireland, unless it be in the barony of Forth, in Wexford. All those who nourish a groundless and splenetic aversion to England in this island, I would lead to this happy scene! I would shew them good landlords,—excellent cultivation of land,—good farm-houses,—woods,—orchards,—fine, and well-inclosed fields and meadows,—respectable cottages,—well-conditioned cattle,—religion unmolested, and industry well paid and encouraged—and then ask, Are these the benefits you disdain? Are these the friends you hate?

It gives pleasure to mention, that at Donneraile-house, the dignity and the virtues of the St. Legers are well represented by the present noble lord. He is truly the father of his tenantry,—a landlord equally benevolent, intelligent, and generous. In the rebellion of 1798, he forgot not the example of the president of Munster, and with happier effect trod in his honorable path.

Like him, surrounded by a most misguided and infuriate people, whom the worst practices had inflamed, he stood undismayed, and by wholesome and vigorous prevention, saved the whole country from a torrent of crimes!

We terminated our walk in Lord Donneraile's park, by visiting a sweet cottage, erected from a plan of the Hon. Miss St. Leger, who superintended the building. Nothing can be more charmingly picturesque than this rural little dwelling, and its whole scenery. It is situated on a small island, round which flows, with melodious gurgling, Spencer's "Mulla." It is shaded by some noble ash-trees, that bend over the sacred stream, which poetry has consecrated to distant time. The cottage is environed by a garden of sweets and evergreens, and designed in the chastest rural style. The interior consists of a very elegant and commodious apartment, where the harp may pour its trembling notes along the Mulla's responsive waves! As the curling smoke stole from its chimney this fine autumnal day, the enchanting scene presented almost all that poetry or painting could desire; but the absence of its lovely mistress took away the fairest and brightest feature of the picture.

I must not omit describing a garden, called, at Donneraile-house, "The Forest-garden," made under the direction of Mrs. Stawell, another accomplished and charming daughter of Lord Donneraile.

It is formed in an open space, near the fine piece of water I mentioned, without walls or banks. A small sunk fence, and rural *chevaux-de-frieze*, painted green, almost permits it to mingle with the surrounding verdure, and assimilate with the forest-scenery of the place. A profusion of flowers, in irregular-shaped beds, intersected by walks of matchless turf, conveys a thousand odours to the charmed senses. The slender acacia, and the larger forest-tree, are permitted to diversify this garden, which can neither be styled French nor English, but has a *je ne sçai quoi* that makes it superior to either. You seem really in a forest, but as if an Armida had thrown a shower of lovely flowers around! A rural seat, under a bending tree in the centre, invites to pleasing study. The whole is singularly charming, and the garden yet retains its beauty, though autumn is fast approaching. The noble and hospitable owner of these domains had the goodness to order his steward to shew us every part of them. But by an invitation to dine at his hospitable mansion, which we received from himself, we closed the day in a way still more gratifying, and commenced our western tour and walk under auspices which can never be forgotten.

Lord Donneraile, though now advanced in years, and rendered infirm by gout, unites all the vivacity of youth to the knowledge and full store of

age. In his society time swiftly flies, and dull must the man be who retires from it uninstructed and unimproved. To him who, like me, was studying the character and history of Ireland,—past and present,—who, as a pedestrian, was reading facts, manners, and institutions as I went, and anxiously laboured to gain truth as the reward of these toils, a guide so enlightened and informed was an advantage far greater than could have been hoped. We were quite ignorant of the west of Ireland, and Lord Donneraile had marched with his regiment through almost every part of it. He knew the northern and western provinces as well as he knew Munster, and with an admirable degree of memory, could point out every village, town, or river, which they contained. His observations on Ireland, and on mankind, were replete with good sense and penetration. He entered at once, with all that ease and rapidity which distinguishes vigorous and great intellect, into the spirit of our pedestrianism, and would, I have no doubt, have been one of the most pleasing companions in the world on such a tour, before time had impaired his strength. It is such society,—not the venerable ruin,—the picturesque scene,—the mingling with the people only,—which completes the traveller's objects. By such society as Lord Donneraile's, his mind becomes corrected and improved,—his prejudices cured,—and his errors detected.

But when I paint Lord D. out as an Irish resident, patriot landlord, dispensing good everywhere around him, and living tranquilly in the bosom of an accomplished and amiable family, shall I seem unreasonably partial, my dear L., in saying that such a character outweighs a whole crowd of voluble patriots or greedy courtiers?

We had a great deal of very interesting conversation relative to Spencer, whose castle of Kilcolman the Donneraile family well know. A gentleman present told me, that the last descendant of the bard had resided not very long ago in Mallow: she was a female, and perhaps great-grand-daughter to Spencer. Lord Donneraile recollected seeing and conversing with the last male surviving descendant, and found him a very acute, intelligent person.

All enquiries relative to the picture of the poet were, however, vain; though I think Lord Donneraile, whom no subject escapes, could have pointed it out to me if any one could. He does not altogether doubt its existence, but fears its former very eccentric owner may have consigned it, in a careless mood, to obscurity, whence it may not be very easy to draw it. There is some probability of its having been removed to Limerick, where we mean to endeavour to trace it.

We were very sorry to learn at Donneraile-house, that fever prevailed in the village and sur-

rounding country Lord Donneraile, and the neighbouring gentry, have, however, taken wise and early steps to prevent its spreading. His lordship has given a range of stables for an hospital, with an inclosed airy yard, and also bedding for the sick. Thus fulfilling every duty, he sets an example which a government may not disdain to follow in the latter point. In this small hospital thirty fever patients are now convalescent. I fear we shall find this but a prelude to more painful knowledge.

We leave this to-morrow very early for Kilmallock, called by some "the Balbec, or Palmyra "of Ireland." We shall again visit (as we shall make it our way), the ruined abode of Spencer. We are now leaving delightful scenes, and society rarely to be found in any country.

I have visited Kilbrack; and though Mr. Stawell was from home, received kind attention there. Mrs. Stawell gave me some information as to Spencer's picture; she thinks it may be near Limerick. The Irish ladies, in general, are pleasing and elegant companions; they unite French gracefulness with English modesty, and have souls full of sensibility and excellent understanding.

You must henceforth expect to hear of the humbler walks of life, and of the homely entertainment we may meet. To us, the wretched cottage will often present its pale inmates, and

their scanty furniture. I fear, too, that unpleasing,—even distressing anecdotes,—may meet our ears, for one cannot dissemble that the embers of the sullen flames of pestilence, of want, and despair, are but sleeping in many parts of Ireland! Limerick, you know, has been long and very much disturbed. I shall write to you a faithful account of things,—nothing concealing or exaggerating. That matters can remain, with prospect of advantage to the empire, as they are, I cannot believe.

I am, most truly, yours, &c.

LETTER VI.

Kilmallock and Limerick, Sept. 1 and 2, 1817.

MY DEAR L.

THIS morning, pretty early, we left Donneraile and its towering woods, the lovely Mulla, and the rural paradise which surrounds Lord Donneraile! We departed with very many pleasing impressions, and the hearty wish that its noble guardian may long preside over it. But the weather, like life, was cloudy and uncertain, and before we reached Kilcolman, the rain descended, and the wind beat upon that mournful and venerated ruin. We were glad to shelter there, and again

to pause and ruminate in the abode of Edmund Spencer. The kitchen, arched with stone, completely secured us from wet, till, as the storm abated, we again ascended the silent tower, where the harp of the divine poet no more resounded, and the mantling ivy everywhere obtruded itself. We surveyed the spot more curiously than time permitted before,—searched with anxious eyes where the gardens and orchards had been, and considered it probable that Sir Walter Raleigh, who introduced the potatoe-plant and cherry-tree into Munster, may have had his first experiments of them made here. At least, the thought of such men as Raleigh and Spencer applying their attention to agricultural improvements at Kilcolman, was pleasing. But the rain returning, and no hope of a clear day appearing, we adjourned our deliberations to the neighbouring cottages, where Irish was almost entirely their language. The name and occupation of Spencer is handed down traditionally among them; but they seem to entertain no sentiments of respect or affection for his memory; the bard came in rather ungracious times, and the keen recollections of this untutored people are wonderful!

A lad from one of these poor habitations shewed us a short way through the lands of Kilcolman to the main road; as it rained and blew, he skipped on gaily before us, without either stockings or shoes, and with very indifferent garments. Nei-

ther wet nor cold incommoded him; and though, perhaps, he was yet without breakfast, his cheerfulness was nothing impaired. Such, in fact, is the real national character, when it is unbroken by misfortune, or unsoured by oppression. In Munster, as in Leinster, we find these engaging traits. It is somewhat surprizing that Spencer appears not to have appreciated their good qualities as they merited; but he spoke not their language, and came to their country full of prejudice against them.

We crossed the Ballyhowra mountains, and had an amazing fine view of the adjacent country from them. Poor mud-cottages were scattered along the road-sides, and we learned, with heartfelt sorrow, that fever was spreading everywhere among them. When this infectious malady enters his cottage, the Irish peasant and family are the most wretched of human beings! Unable to procure medical, or any other aid,—provided with no matters useful for the sick,—and becoming objects of terror in the midst of their poor and uninfected neighbours,—they sicken, linger, and die in their habitations!

With kind attention, we were warned on our way to Charleville, against entering several cottages, whether for shelter or a draught of water. The idea of a great population oppressed by famine, fever, high rents, and other imposts, stood in tremendous horror before us. However

painful the lesson, (said we,) it must be instructive, and good may come of it. Under this aspect we shall see the body of the people, and discern how vainly men boast of vast numbers in a state, whose aggregate of misery renders them now weak and helpless; and how awfully responsible are governments for allowing centuries to pass over without remedying their condition!'

Descending the Ballyhowra mountains, we, in some time, entered the county of Limerick, whose fertile and level land spread widely round us, and arrived at Charleville, a tolerable town, but of a bare appearance, and similar to most Irish ones.

Resting in a public-house, we fell into conversation with some farmers; an intelligent one informed us the rents were still called for at the war-rate; but added, "it grew daily more difficult to pay them." His reasoning was acute, and powerful. "The gentry," said he, "can now live for a great deal less; and, having made great profit by land in war, must now be content with less. Half the war-rents, well paid, will be more desirable for them, than to be striving to keep up their rent-roll at an exorbitant rate, and destroying the country. Distraining, and auctions, may proceed some time, but cannot gain their point for them. One tenant will run away; another will succeed, but cannot pay, and must also go, and so on!

"The jail, or the road, is before ourselves and "families!" He informed us, that land, in general, rose to five, six, and seven pounds the acre, at the close of the war; and that potatoe-ground was let for ten, eleven, and twelve guineas the acre to cottagers; and, disgraceful as it may appear, these poor creatures are not allowed to dig them till the demands of the rich farmers are fully satisfied. Thus, labourers may starve at work, and families at home be perishing, under this dreadful land-system, exacting the rent from the farmer, and compelling him to extort from the cottage before the humble meal can be procured, which, at best, is barely sufficient to support existence!

These cottagers have no cow, no garden, no fowl—they literally exist on the road-side, and the scanty price of labour (sixpence, or tenpence per day) is all they have! All this system of wretchedness existing, where the land is exuberantly fertile, and scarcely requires manure, gives great room for reflection! There is no government but must perceive that it is wearisome to legislate for despair; and to controul, within sober bounds, men whose heart-strings are racked and broken by never-ending misery!

Were the most improbable of all events to place me, my dear L., in the situation now so ably filled by the Secretary for Ireland, I think the cries of thousands, yea, millions of impover-

of Henry's wisdom was in a moment lost; and the queen of a party ceased to be the monarch of her subjects! She created rebellions and invasions against herself, and died while a forty-years' expensive war was unextinguished in this country.

Such reflections recur unavoidably in passing through Munster, as we do, for the first time and in our manner, studying nature and the page of history with the same glance!

May no Continental war ever again find Ireland unsettled, and unredressed! May no foreign invaders ever again be able to found hopes of distracting, or dismembering this glorious empire, on the misery of its inhabitants!

By a masterly strain of politics, Elizabeth might have secured the affections of the Irish, and defied all the machinations of Spain. Her subjects here would have been Catholics, but not Papists; and their loyalty to their religion been a pledge of fidelity to the crown.

It appears, that before Lord Sussex returned to Ireland, the queen hesitated on the part she should take in this island on the out-set of her government: perhaps she felt too weak to follow the dictates of her own great and unbiassed mind;—a young and accomplished female,—she could scarcely be expected to venture to oppose the gravity of experienced Lords, or the greedy narrowness of powerful party,—with a reluctant

hand, perhaps, cast the die, which, for a century and a half, drenched this fair island in blood.

Sussex came back, but the councils of a St. Leger no longer moderated and calmed the scene. The government and the population were set at issue against one another. A fearful war to wage! and difficult, indeed, to end, if persecuted religion, with eyes upraised to Heaven, scowls through the storm!

These distressing, but far from useless reflections, brought us to the gates of Kilmallock. —Gates! you exclaim—is it thus you speak of a petty village in Limerick? Even so. As the pleasant and grateful evening-sun dwelt on its ruined walls and castles, we entered, through an arched gateway, crowned by a very picturesque tower, this singular old city. We found a tolerably small inn, and, after dinner, explored the ruins of Kilmallock. The main street appears to have been composed of castles, many of which remain. Regular transverse streets, with gates and towers, in different directions, formed the plan of the city, and its walls were guarded by small towers at intervals. We saw a fragment of the wall, in one part, with one of these towers very beautiful, and very perfect. The castle and gateway, on the entrance from Limerick, still makes a grand appearance. This extraordinary place, before the introduction of cannon,

must have been very strong. They tell here of Cromwell taking it; and have an anecdote, that on his enquiring the name of each person's house, in order to spare those of English origin, he was told at the first "Meade," at the second "Meade," and the same at the third, and so on.—"Meade, Meade," said Cromwell, suspecting imposition,—"burn them all!" The impression of this ferocious republican's cruelty is quite recent in Ireland, as it were of yesterday; but it has inspired horror and hatred united—nothing of fear. Such is truly the Irish character, as to all military exploits or violences committed against them. They analyse the matter with a contemptuous coolness, and wonderful sagacity; and, in this way, the military genius of this surprizing people is often seen breaking forth in the lowest classes.

The Englishman talks of politics, agriculture, or the sports of the country, with pleasure and calm good sense; but war is the darling theme of the Irishman—the difficulties of a siege, a daring surprize, rapid expeditions through the country, and all the varieties of a campaign he relishes, understands, and shews he could well bear his part in them, if opportunity occurred.

If I were to venture predictions for future times, I should say, that were the British empire to fall, through mismanagement at home, the military re-action of this extraordinary people will be the principal cause of its dissolution. The

Irishman has no objection to mingle amorous remarks in his conversations with this display of military talent. Take him thus, and you have this animated being, whether he runs along the river-side, or rapidly descends his own verdant mountains with you, pourtrayed before your eyes.

The evening closed on us before we had half seen Kilmallock, and we were glad to repose. Scarcely had the tender rays of an autumnal sun cast their light on the castles and ruins of Kilmallock, when I arose, and, as their long shadows marked the earth, was soon in the midst of them. The abbey church and the monastery, on the respective sides of the small stream which runs past Kilmallock, are extremely beautiful and venerable ruins. The pure gothic is here beautifully displayed in the finest windows, arches, and door-ways—in the long and stately aisles, the towers, and roofing of these interesting buildings. They are quite outside the walls of Kilmallock, and must once have contained great numbers of religious men. Vestiges of their gardens and orchards are remembered here, but are not now seen. A long regular road to the monastery is obvious still. A very intelligent inhabitant of Kilmallock conducted me through the ruins of these once very grand religious establishments. Numerous ancient tombs are found which interest much, but as I have declined long ago the office of antiquarian, I must

refer you to books, or to your own inspection for particulars of them. One, called the tomb of the White Knight, arrested my attention peculiarly, as he was one of the Geraldines of Munster, who resided near this. The rude magnificence of these chieftains yet dazzles the people. They tell of many marvellous things relating to the "White Knight," at Kilmallock, and seem proud of his power and rude exploits. My guide shewed me the spot where his castle stood, on the river-side, a small distance from Kilmallock. Huge fragments of it have fallen into the water, and remain cemented together, intercepting, in some parts, the stream, and resembling masses of natural rock.

The rude conflicts of chieftains invading, and invaded, undoubtedly gave great scope for the exercise of personal valour, but must have been miserably injurious to agriculture, to all the peaceful arts of life in Ireland, and to the wholesome operations of one supreme government.

The "White Knight," whose tomb we had just surveyed, is said to have excelled in bodily strength and valour, but to have been cruel and vindictive in the extreme. He held a sort of court, where his prisoners were condemned, and soon afterwards executed, without mercy or discrimination. Burning and sudden slaughter were his preludes to negociation; and plunder, prisoners, or unjust extent of territory, his sole objects.

He reigned a gloomy tyrant in these territories, and was killed in a desperate engagement at some distance from this, in crossing a river, and by his own soldiers, at his command, lest he might be made prisoner by his foes!

Here we find, in Munster, the disastrous consequences of Henry the Second's large grants of land exemplified at Kilmallock; and a lord of English race vieing with, and exceeding Irish chieftains in petty despotism and savage conduct.

On returning to our inn to breakfast, I wished again to behold the ruined monastery, and the tomb of this too-fatally renowned White Knight. In one part of the ruins, where a fine arched side-aisle was still very perfect, and its stone-roof kept off the rain, my guide shewed some terror. I soon learned from him the cause. A person ill of fever had been left there the day before, lest he should communicate the infection to the family where he lodged. He was left to expire!!! His hollow voice plaintively implored some drink. I assured him he should have it, and be taken care of, and hope revived at the moment life was ebbing fast away. In another part of this monastery I saw a hat of a departed victim of fever exposed some time ago, and at our inn I heard the following story:—An American gentleman, totally a stranger, well clad, and of pleasing appearance, came a few months ago to Kilmallock. He went to no inn, but wandered about the

ruins, till, at last, entering them, he was observed no more, and, perhaps, forgotten! He was ill, and fever burned in his veins; but where can the pennyless and forlorn wanderer turn in a country where he is without friends or money? It happened a gentleman was ill at the inn, and required the attendance of a person to set up every night. The inn-keeper's son performed this humane office frequently; and very early one morning, as the stars were fading at the approach of twilight, he walked out to the monastery to refresh himself with the morning air. He heard a murmuring noise, as of some human being. It was two or three days after the American gentleman's disappearance! He recollected this, and advanced—but, can I go on!—Extended on his back, in a recess of a ruined ailse, the unfortunate stranger lay speechless, expiring!—one hand clenched the mouldering wall; the other his hat. The young man, terrified and shocked, ran for assistance. On his return, this victim of misfortune was no more! Fever had arrested his steps, and, as there was neither hospital nor dispensary at Kilmallock, which, belonging to numerous proprietors, can have no peculiar presiding landlord, he perished in the dreadful manner I have related.

In case of contagious fever, or plague, such as now afflicts Ireland, I think, my dear L., a board of health in every province, to which reports

could be made, ought to be appointed on the first symptoms of disease, and be enabled by the government to establish temporary fever-hospitals in every parish and town. It is surprizing that, in a country where so great and so poor a population exists, this has not been done long ago. Boards of various kinds have been formed in different departments, and surely none is of superior consequence to that of the public health! Each county having a minor board to communicate with the provincial one, deriving its authority and means from government; and reporting to a superior board in the metropolis, a simultaneous check might be given to fever on its first appearance, and many valuable lives be secured and saved!* What carries on agriculture, commerce, manufacture, fisheries?—What fills army and navy?—What pays rent?—What yields revenue?—What supports every profession, and is the true and living wealth of nations—but population? And if the great body of it be attacked by infectious malady, suddenly slackening its sinews, and suspending the labours of society, what care so interesting, so noble, and so superceding every other for a government as that of the public health? Shall public works

* Since this was written, a bill to this effect, but with some rather severe and unconstitutional provisions, has been enacted for Ireland. I doubt its success.

be devised, and money appropriated to employ men, many of whom may languish under fever, and may spread it amongst the healthy? Shall the feeble palliative of private subscription, from an exhausted community, be permitted to stand in place of a large grant from the legislation, called together for the occasion, if required?

We know how fever rages in Cork; we have seen and met it on the roads and in villages, and we hear that, in Limerick, it greatly prevails. I believe none of the provinces are exempt from this plague; but no grand measure has been devised. We shall be doomed, I apprehend, in this our greatest pedestrian tour, to behold the vast population of a large portion of this island writhing under a new torture, and arrived at the utmost acmé of human misery!

Before we left Kilmallock we visited Achill, near it, a handsome place, and were received with the most pleasing hospitality by its owner, Mr. Evans. He shewed much humanity respecting the poor being ill in the ruins; and is one of those impartial and spirited magistrates who would do much good in the country, if well seconded. I am not able, having no books with us, to state when Kilmallock was built. It is of great antiquity, however, and is a small corporation, having a court and jurisdiction around it for some miles. By some of the Lord Deputies it was used as a garrison, and Sir William Drury

issued orders from thence in Elizabeth's reign. A remarkable incident, which occurred in Kilmallock several years after the death and forfeiture of estates of the late Earl of Desmond, shews the Irish character in a striking point of view. The young Desmond, son of that unfortunate chieftain, had been sent over to England, by the Irish government, to be educated under the eye of the Queen, and in the reformed religion.

After some years she thought fit that he should return to Munster, to try if the attachment of the people to his name and family might not be turned to beneficial purposes for the state. The young Lord James accordingly came to Kilmallock, once, doubtless, a strong seat of the power of the Desmonds. A universal sensation pervaded the country on the news of his arrival. Multitudes flocked to and crowded Kilmallock, to feast their eyes with the sight of their lost, and lamented young lord. They could not satiate themselves with beholding the beloved youth. Again and again they returned to hail his return and bless his presence! Never was Irish sensibility more strongly excited, or expressed. At length Sunday arrived, and young Desmond prepared and set forth to attend the worship of the reformed church. He was mild and unassuming, and ill-fitted to meet the torrent which assailed him. Groans, tears, and intreaties, were poured forth to prevent his proceeding.

Females caught his hands, kissed them, and, with affecting lamentation, prayed him to forbear. The men frowned and threatened. The crowd increased—groans, hisses, and execrations began to be poured forth. Desmond, unaltered, went on and entered the church. In a few moments all was silence. The multitude instantly dispersed. On the young lord's return, not a single being stayed to bid—"God bless him."

We have an historical account of the Roman Emperor Augustus educating a prince of the Parthians, named Tonones, on a similar plan of policy. It proved in the reign of Tiberius equally unsuccessful.

Thus was the queen taught the extreme futility of her plans to overthrow, in a few hours, what had been implanted a thousand years in the human breast, in Ireland; and which, unless it yields to conviction, cannot be put down by power, the sword, or artifice. There, man takes his last stand against tyranny,—there, even on the threshold of another life, he devotes himself calmly to the worst fate which may await; and vindicates, in his last breath, the right of man to liberty of conscience!

We left Kilmallock in the middle of the day, and, on a rising ground above the town, on the Limerick road, had a very fine view of this truly venerable spot. Its many castles, towers, and ruined walls, its monastery and abbey, the frag-

ments of the White Knight's castle, the humble cottages, and the not-far distant groves of Ashfield; the charming stream which passes between the religious buildings, and the pleasantly undulating and still verdant fields round Kilmallock, with a far-extended view of Ballyhowra and other mountains, altogether afforded us a scene of ruined magnificence and beauty, far surpassing all the expectations we had entertained! We were informed, however, that Kilmallock has, within these last forty or fifty years, suffered greatly from many dilapidating hands, and that some of the most curious of the old castles, and parts of the walls, had been entirely removed.

It is truly melancholy that in Ireland there is not more general respect for her ruins. Are they not a guide to history, and an affecting memorial of the past? In their reverence for ruins, and particularly for religious ones, I fully join with the lower Irish. It bespeaks a just feeling for antiquity, and does them great honour. They assist the memory, and call forth those contemplative ideas which are always salutary. Looking down on this ancient city of Kilmallock, we think we see the ancient glory of Ireland revived, and the proud days of Munster restored, when the kings she produced, who were truly great men, reigned. You are aware that this province, including the adjoining southern and western parts, was called, at one period, Leath Mogha,

and divided the sovereignty with the northern, called then Leath Conn. Learning long flourished in it, and frequently adorned the throne itself. Arms and arts were successfully cultivated, and the south appears to have enjoyed tranquillity, and learned leisure, when other parts of the island were convulsed by struggles for power. Then the melodious strains of the harp resounded through her green vales, or were heard in the venerable piles where the Deity was worshipped.

Who has not heard of the war-like tribe of the Dalgais—the heroes of South Munster?—of Cormack, a king distinguished by wisdom, learning, and piety?—or, of Brian Boromy, who merited and gained the monarchy of Ireland? who almost freed her from the Danes; but who could not conquer her internal feuds, or leave behind him a permanent constitution for the state. In such times, poetry flourished in the south, then addicted to a pastoral life so favourable to it; and the harp softened and refined the manners by its various lays! but, in truth, its strains of joy have been too long silent in this fair country, and every friend to human nature must anxiously wish more pleasing times revived. Pursuing our way to Limerick, I now close this letter, assuring you how truly I am, &c. &c.

LETTER VII.

Limerick, Sept. 2, 1817.

MY DEAR L.

We arrived in this renowned city, yesterday, fatigued. We devote this day to rest, and in so favourable a moment of leisure I purpose continuing to describe our walk from Kilmallock. We observed nothing remarkable in the agriculture of this part of Munster as we passed along; the soil is very rich, but the farmers want skill and capital to make it sufficiently productive. The want of green crops is almost universal; but I am sorry to say that the extreme poverty of the people partly occasions this. Turnips, cabbages, beans, peas, &c. &c. would not be allowed to remain in the fields very long. They would disappear at night by the hands of the cottage-paupers of this unhappy country; so that, in every point of view, it is vain to expect agriculture to thrive, where there is so much misery. This the gentry of Ireland feel very much; they find their green crops, as soon as esculent, carried away, their woods and hedges broken and removed, and their sheep too frequently stolen.

Without palliating dishonesty one cannot avoid remarking, that the residence of the wealthy landholder, amidst a great and starving population,

must ever be attended with the unpleasant concomitants of the loss of agricultural produce, the prevention of improvement, or the painful necessity of prosecuting and punishing the starving wretches whom continued and irretrievable distress may have formed into rogues!

Flax begins to be cultivated in Munster, but as yet makes small progress, though highly encouraged by the gentry. I apprehend that this province has never recovered the shock which the prohibition of its woollen trade, that unwise, selfish, and barbarous measure, in the reigns of Charles the First and William, gave to Munster. There is no art in society which requires so much unlimited freedom as that of agriculture. The nature of the land points out its proper use and produce. But England has scarcely yet learned that the more generally flourishing this island becomes, the more she will produce revenue, deprecate the foreign ravager, and render expensive home-armies unnecessary. The policy of the imperious, and often ill-counselled elder brother, is not yet extinct; and the fine capacities which nature has given this island, and the astonishingly great intellectual qualities of its inhabitants, will be long, it is to be apprehended, dreaded, rather than cherished and cultivated.

Our enquiries led us to examine, from the intelligent of all classes, if this country was now tranquil, and exempt from those nightly and

other disturbances which the public papers have of late so often announced to have disgraced it! With great regret we heard, that though the Insurrection-bill has been recently taken off, there is far from a hope of permanent tranquillity. There is one most shocking transaction in this county, which I cannot omit;—a few months ago, a young farmer, who had quarrelled with some fellows of his neighbourhood, was attacked by them in a field with scythes, and before any assistance arrived, he was literally hewed and cut to pieces! Nature recoils at the horrid recital!

Parties who went about last winter, at night, whether to impress terror on any persons taking land contrary to their system, or for plunder, adopted the savage practice of firing through the doors and windows, and into the beds of the unhappy persons they attacked.

Though things look peaceable now, a very well-informed man told us, he thought that they would grow worse with the coming winter, and that the Insurrection-bill must again be imposed on parts of this country. You are not, perhaps, fully aware of the precise nature of this act of parliament, made for, and applied to Ireland only, of the whole empire. It erects, at the pleasure of any governor of Ireland, and a few privy-councillors, and in any part of that country, a tribunal of a King's council, and bench of magistrates, who try the subject without aid of jury, and for new-

formed offences, not cognizable by, or known to the English laws. The venial circumstance of absence from home after sun-set, or before sun-rise, makes any man in Ireland, where the provisions of this act are enforced, liable to transportation to Botany-bay for any term the tribunal just mentioned may decree, unless he gives what may be termed a satisfactory account of himself!

You will fully agree with me, my dear L., that the trial by jury is the most inestimable part of the British constitution; and, with its other benefits, was secured to the Irish by the charters of several English monarchs, and by that reciprocity of protection due for their allegiance and submission. As I differ from all English parties in regard to the justice and policy of applying such a law to Ireland, I cannot be accused of flattering any, if I say that I think it has none but injurious consequences in the end, and tends to alienate this country from Great-Britain more than most measures that could be devised. Lord Holland must recollect that I remonstrated with him against this fatal blow to expiring liberty in Ireland! It was originally a temporary war-expedient, to restrain insurrection; in my mind, the old treason-laws were sufficient.

We have no where discovered that disaffection, or inclination to foreign power, exists. Partial disorder in time of peace is therefore sought to

be remedied by the Bill, and the same preventive for apprehended overthrow of government, and the ebullition of private or parish feuds, is applied. The disturbances of predatory banditti, generated amongst an excessive and insufficiently employed population, cannot be rectified by any temporary measure. A deep-rooted disease cannot be conquered by attaching some external symptom! In trying times, there may be banditti formed in a state, of two classes,—the ill-disposed taking advantage of public distress, and those rendered desperate by want of home, food, or employ. Surely the common law, and impartial vigilant magistrates, may reach the former, and it is hard to visit the latter with the severest measure of punishment. A system of terror has never yet been found to effect permanent good on the Irish character; and that established by this Bill is not only very expensive to the state, but alters the nature of the magistracy, making it inquisitorial instead of administrative,—despotic instead of constitutional. How much scope does it give to passion, and prejudice, and private revenge! One great objection of mine to it, is, that it imitates the measures of revolutionary France; a source from whence little good proceeded, when democratic tyranny began to engender violent laws, such as this. How many families are by it made enemies to the British goverment! What an addition

to mendicity must it not have created! How repugnant to the vivacity and freedom of the Irish character, and therefore impolitic as a law, embracing the inhabitants of whole baronies and counties, whether that a few be fond of the cheerful dance, or concerned in nightly impropriety! As the true object of every friend to the empire must be to unite Ireland harmoniously to Great-Britain, it is to be regretted that mistaken policy (doubtless from the best motives) introduces by such measures the most repellant principles.

Of Irish patriots who supported this measure, I can only say, that to this day their conduct fills me with astonishment and sorrow. It was said by some of them, that the Bill was necessary, —as against a French party in Ireland. In all our walks, I have seen or heard of no such thing. The Bill is, in fact, rather calculated to make one that did not exist before. However, the horrible excesses too often and too generally committed in Ireland at present, it must be fully admitted, may well appal the legislator; but I venture to think he must go much deeper than an Insurrection-bill penetrates, to terminate them; nor should he omit a revision of the magistracy, among his subjects of contemplation. From my observations of the whole country, I think an Insurrection-bill unnecessary, as well as impolitic, and a bad precedent. Good magistrates, not despotic tribunals, are the want of the people.

For my part, my dear L., I should greatly prefer, to harsh and irritating temporary Bills, some of the old wholesome regulations of Alfred,—the Saxon to the Norman William the First's law,—and the enrolling the substantial farmers, and respectable young men in each parish, under one or two worthy impartial magistrates,—men of good fortune, good education, and sound friends to government and people. I like not the sword of Damocles suspended over a people. Threatening measures are not always preventive ones. There is more dignity in forgiving at once, in a government, than in any suspending proceedings.

Such are my ideas, which may be erroneous; but I am supported in several of them by some high legal characters in England, who stand a bright exception amongst their party, and take their ground on the good and wholesome principle of truly and wholly imparting the British laws to Ireland; I mean Sir S. Romilly and Sir Arthur Pigott.

I entertain a sincere respect for the present secretary, and think his talents and disposition of the first order. He may have information far superior to mine, but in sincere wishes for the welfare and integrity of the island, I will not yield to him. No doubt, the ferocity which appears so truly shocking in many parts of Ireland, may seem to warrant the most extraordinary preven-

tive measures; but it is well known that excessive harshness in laws, renders the minds of men callous; nor is it consistent with the true spirit of legislation to invest the governor of a country with the despotic power of suspending her liberty from year to year for the faults of a few. All such discretionary kind of laws and measures are quite abhorred by the British constitution. The very best principle of law is, that it is fixed. The least possible assumption of discretion, or of holding men in suspense, in laws, legislators, or lawyers, is desirable. In the divine attribute and privilege of extending mercy, the constitution best and beautifully allows it to the crown; but this is in favour of liberty and life, and on the responsibility of the chief magistrate.

A degree of this ferocity in Ireland is much to be attributed, I believe, to a constant use of raw spirits by the lower classes here. This practice, joined to want of education and subordination, certainly hardens and makes men unfeeling and inhuman. They become so in private life, in their families, and soon practise on a larger scale the atrocities they have indulged in at home.

I am quite sure that a very considerable civilizing step, obviating in a certain degree the supposed necessity of unconstitutional laws, would be the general introduction of ale and other malt-drink in room of ardent spirits. Public peace would be well bought by some surrender of revenue. To

meliorate that disposition from whence so many crimes flow, would be better policy for Ireland, than suspending the trial by jury, and punishing them in a summary manner. The taking land also over the heads of the old tenants, is a great cause, in Limerick, of violent and cruel deeds. The population is prodigiously great, and there is a constant struggle for land going on. Strangers from other parts, with more money, frequently obtain the farm sought for. On this I have dwelt in a former letter, in our first walk. The particular application is strong in this country. The price of labour too is so very low, and employment often not at all to be had, that excruciating distress must continually prevail, and the want of manufacture completes it.

What, in fact, my dear L., is the best reply to those defending an Insurrection-bill for Ireland? It is this:—Instead of domiciliary visits, and confining men at home by coercion, rather open the doors wide for an immense and insufficiently employed population; provide a judicious vent for their numbers; then you will deem Insurrection-bills unnecessary, and the laws of England sufficient. An effort to violently coerce a vivacious and overflowing population, puts the lives of magistrates and constables in jeopardy, or makes them remiss in enforcing the provisions of a hard law.

If an Irishman suspected of, or known to have

committed irregular nightly visitations, were brought before a prudent and benevolent magistrate,—the laws and constitution of England explained to him,—if he were seriously admonished and told "to go, and sin no more," it may be confidently said, that in seven cases out of nine the result would be happy, provided a wise land-system relieves him somewhat. How different from tearing from the distracted family the only supporter and head! and for the constructive crime of absence from home at night, banished to the far-distant receptacle of felons, and the worst members of society. It was unpleasing on every account to walk through this county, under the recent circumstances it had laboured under.

We paused a short time at a very pleasant inn, situated near the respectable small town of Bruff. A beautiful stream flowed before the door, and our landlady was obliging and friendly, so as to make us regret we had not been remaining there instead of the homely abode we had at Kilmallock. The scene was soothing to the feelings; and here I quietly digested those thoughts I have troubled you with, on what I conceive the mistaken idea of reforming the population of this island by excessive severity.

The road from Bruff to Limerick leads through a very fine country, but we heard, with fresh sorrow, of fever in every part, and the language of

despair from some of those poor people on the way who had relatives ill, or had themselves recently recovered, smote our very hearts! They strongly approved the idea of small fever-hospitals. "But," said they, "alas! how are the poor to get such things? Who is it cares for *them?*"

A mile or two from Bruff we discovered, in some fields adjoining the road, a large circular Druidical place of worship; the diameter was sixty yards, and the circle was formed by large upright stones; one very large one, much higher than the rest, about eighteen feet, stood in it. A smaller circular spot, formed in the same manner, is not far from it. What may be the antiquity or exact uses of these circles, I cannot pretend to say. I have called them Druidical, in compliance with the general style of speaking. They may have been used by other ministers of religion, before Druids were known! The antiquity of the customs and manners of Ireland is, perhaps, not fully known; it is, beyond doubt, very great. As a place of worship, where a simple and virtuous race offered their humble adoration to a great directing Deity, we viewed it with respect, and did not leave it hastily. The origin, dates, and peculiar rites of these rude circles, I however leave to antiquarians. Several young Irishmen accompanied us to, and remained with us, at them. They conversed with interest on their probable uses, and derived much pleasure

from our remarks, to which they replied with great acuteness and feeling.

But as our time was short, we hastened to leave these rude memorials of the piety of former days. Since their erection, who is it can say how many centuries; how many generations have floated into the tide of futurity? On our way, we passed many handsome places. On the left, the chief baron of the Exchequer's fine mansion;—farther on, Mr. Grady's charming demesne, and several other seats adorned the country; the whole was a very rich and noble scene of agricultural beauty. As you approach Limerick, it improves. The farmers' houses are good, and no striking wretchedness meets the eye.

Fatigued with our walking, we stopped within three miles of the city, at an humble inn, to procure refreshment. The good man gave us some information. The rents, he said, were quite beyond the power of the small farmer to pay, unless there was another war; and he enquired anxiously, "if there was not a prospect of one "with Russia?" He was an hospitable creature, and his son, a young lad, played several Irish airs on a small octave flute for us. At our request, his mother, who had taught him all these tunes by ear, sang several plaintive and mournful airs in the genuine Irish manner, which pleased us greatly. Every cadence of her songs (Ailcen a Roon in particular) was performed with ge-

nuine pathos, and her voice did them much justice. It told to the feelings the tale of Erin's, or of some lover's woes, in language that could not be misunderstood; and we almost wept, that Munster had no longer her royal halls, her poets, and warriors; or that the deserted lover, who seemed to complain, should mourn in vain.

We departed,—but the song yet thrills through my soul! with what potent effect it breathed of melancholy things! The harp and the pipes are, you know, the national musical instruments of Ireland. We have not met them on our way in Munster, and I fear the former is fast declining. I need not describe to you what you have seen. You know, also, how exactly the Irish harp resembles the paintings found in ancient Thebes by Bruce and Denon. It is mortifying to lovers of music and antiquity, that it has been so much exploded in this island. I do not exactly pronounce where the fault lays, but I fear it has been rudely dealt with by English hands! With milder and better policy, it would have been their potent ally.

To a very ancient and high-spirited nation, such as this, music, poetry, and religion, are inexpressibly dear; they twine into the very fibres of the soul, if I may say so; and language, the humbler, but scarcely less powerful associate of the three, binds their stems together. A nation does not yield them, but with existence; nor

need she be deprived of them in forming an alliance with another. But that other, if she be the superior, and prudent, will respect and admire them as the valued inmates of a chosen friend. To insult and trample on them, is tasteless and bad policy. The Irish music has been long justly admired; and Carolan, a modern composer and poet, you, my dear L., perfectly well know, had great original merit, both as poet and musician. Now I grieve that we see not,—or hear not,—the harp of Erin in the green vales of Munster! In time it might have received improvements, and its sweet music contributed to civilize and soften the mind. I do not hesitate to assert, that England erred much in ancient times, by not encouraging here that great mollifier of rude nature—*Music*. If she feared warlike and hostile strains, might they not easily have been turned to her own advantage in animating Irish troops against the enemies of the empire, and repaid her for her protection of the harp? and how greatly would it have kept the national character soft and refined! But statesmen too often omit to touch, with a master's hand, the keys of the human heart, and grasping violently what they might easily have allured to them, spoil their own acquisitions, and transmit to their successors confusion, and a tangled heap of desolation.

The following lines arose out of this subject, which occupied my thoughts, and are inscribed to a sister Muse:

TO MRS. LIDDIARD.

MURMURS the harp of Erin's better days,
Nor round its strings one beam of glory plays!
In the lone dell, the passing stranger hears
The low vibration, and the burst of tears;
Near the dark rock, the Bard but dares to sigh,
Nor trust his sorrows to the public eye!
A country fall'n, can bid no Muse arise
To paint past glories to the list'ning skies,
Nor sweet reward from patriot hand shall warm,
No wide-resounding praise the Bard shall charm;
Yet be not they, whom Erin's woes inspire,
Chill'd by such times, nor quench'd the Poet's fire!
Though, nor reward, nor praise, attend the lay,
Immortal Time prepares a brightening ray;
And Erin's harp, now clothed with gloomy night,
At length shall, rising, catch the holy light!
Then they, who hail'd it in disastrous hour,
Shall stand the guardians of its secret power;
Though lost to earth, shall feel their country's love
Bend from the clouds, and taste that bliss above;
While the loud pæan of a people's praise,
Though late, shall consecrate their soul-fraught lays!
And thou,* whose bosom throbs, even now, to sing
Of Erin's ancient times, and sweetly bring

* This allusion refers to a Society, of which the Author was the founder, the object of which was to uphold the Irish harp, fast sinking into oblivion. Amongst the Subscribers, and those who made literary contributions, was the person to whom these verses are addressed. The List of Subscribers had to boast of a Moore, a Scott, a Walker, and the first literary characters of the day.

To her sad harp, a wreath of genial flowers,
Rich as the chaplet, bathed in summer showers;
Thou, too, when friendship mourns, and Erin sighs,
Shalt read thy praises in a nation's eyes;
Then just applause shall reach thy haunts on high,
And bless the Muse's strains, that never die!

As we approached Limerick, the environs and view became beautiful. A country tradesman walked a mile with us, and assured us that for twenty years and more he had never known such distress; and that the whole country suffered from want of provision, high rents, sickness, and stagnation of trade! We arrived rather late, and were extremely glad of last night's repose.

Believe me, yours, &c.

LETTER VIII.

Limerick, Sept. 3, 1817.

MY DEAR L.

This city contains from 80,000 to 90,000 inhabitants, and, situated on the noble Shannon, makes a fine appearance. The new part is extremely handsome, and well planned; but the old is formed of ill-shaped streets, and narrow lanes, crowded by a great and distressed population. It once owned the sway of the royal house of

O'Brien, submitted to Henry the Second shortly after Cork, and received his garrison. The Danes long held a great force here; and, in general, I imagine that the presence of these foreigners facilitated the success of the English, whether they themselves preferred them and their alliance to that of the Irish, or that the latter were glad to throw off the Danish yoke, as well as that of their own despots.

After Henry's departure, when Limerick had revolted, it was taken in a very gallant manner by Raymond le Gros. His army making some hesitation on the banks of the Shannon near it, he spurred his horse, plunged in, and was followed by his soldiers:—an heroic action, too little noticed!

The city very quickly surrendered, though the English general was soon after constrained to abandon it, and to have the mortification of beholding the parts he had fortified fired by O'Brien and his adherents. It shared many vicissitudes, and maintained a variable and rude independance in common with Connaught and Munster, between which it was the great key and pass-port, for many centuries. Limerick fell under the power of the De Burghos in course of time, and had various vicissitudes of temporary rulers and chieftains. At length it underwent final subjection by the arms of William, under General Ginkle.

In Ireland's earliest times, of which history gives broken and irregular gleams, but no continued and perspicuous records, it is probable that Limerick was a seat of government for the South. The Shannon offered a great and easy inlet to adventurers from the Continents, whether of Europe, Asia, America, or Africa, long before the Milesian invasion. The original race or prior adventurers were extinct, when hardy and heroic bands, evidently of Celtic root, spreading over Munster and Connaught, colonized those parts with families whom nature taught a pastoral and agricultural life. Their music and harps, of the first antiquity in the world, and their language, are, to this present period, existing and sensible proofs of their Celtic ancestry. Their ancestors, perhaps, enjoyed some great empire, before those of Nineveh, Babylon, or Assyria were known. They soon filled the West and South; spread to the East, and penetrated to the North of Ireland; lived under patriarchal governments of tribes, and, cultivating the arts of peace, worshipped one Deity.

Such a picture, at least, agrees with the remarkable description by Diodorus Siculus, of this island; and which, by an eastern race, was naturally called Erin, or the Western Isle. They were disturbed, at length, by many northern invaders, and finally conquered by the Milesians, or Spaniards, five or six hundred years before

the Christian era, who established the pentarchal government. But many original traits of this early Celtic stock remained, and if these last invaders had not arrived, and by conquest introduced the most defective of all governments, a virtuous and happy republic, or limited monarchy, might have sprung up in this too long agitated and unhappy isle. The Milesians, infected with a rage for petty royalties, allowed it little repose.

The Danes, a commercial, military, and hardy race, profited fully by the divisions of the Milesian kings. The English, led by Henry the Second, gave them one supreme government, which promised universal peace; but, as we have seen, left for centuries, to Limerick, and the provinces we are now exploring, that rude exemption from the wholesome controul of government of which I spoke in commencing this letter. Munster, however, had the glory of producing a man, long previous to the English king's arrival, who might have given freedom to Ireland, if she had been fit to receive and maintain it,—the renowned,—justly renowned,—Brian Borom, King of Munster, who resided in this city before he was called to the government of the whole island. He had undoubted talents as a warrior and statesman; but the defectiveness of the constitution, and rivalry of the petty kings, on his decease, instantly obliterated the fruits of his victories over

the Danes, and of his cares as monarch of Ireland. The sons of Milenus introduced a radical defect, which no internal power could cure!

After the death of Brian, the Danes recovered their power in Limerick; and the very strong works, of which remarkable vestiges are still to be seen, were probably formed by them. When you visit Limerick, you will not wonder that it betrayed me into fresh historical disquisition.

The situation of this city, on the finest river in Ireland, or the empire, dissecting by great divisions the central part of the island, as well as forming a great channel between Clare and Limerick to the sea, and in the midst of the richest lands of Munster and Connaught, is exceedingly striking. Nature has pointed it out to the most remote generations as an emporium for external and internal trade. That majestic stream which flows before me, may have borne on its glassy bosom the original colonizers of this fair and fertile island, and witnessed their debarkation in meadows, ever rich and verdant, through the bounteous disposition of nature! The sweet harp may have recorded their bloodless triumph, and peaceful progress. Long may they have enjoyed these rural and unrivalled scenes,—the repose under lofty trees,—the happy arts of agricultural life,—the varying charms of this king of rivers,—the foaming and pellucid Shannon, rolling his blue stream before their delighted

eyes, and calmly worshipping the God of their ancestors;—perhaps, even, my dear L., in such simple places of worship as we have so recently visited, till turbulent and sanguinary invaders broke on the heavenly scene, and till the haughty Milesians, with conquering hands, imposed petty thrones in every territory, and in their train came oppression, pride, avarice, baleful vanity, and murderous civil war!

Since I laid down my pen, we have made a very pleasing, though fatiguing excursion. Having learned that a part of the Shannon, called the Falls of Doonass, six or seven miles from the city, in an inland direction, was very beautiful, we resolved to see it. We had the additional motive of hoping to find the picture of Edmund Spencer at the house of Alderman Vincent, said to be near these Falls. We pursued our way, as directed, along the canal at Limerick, till we reached the bank of the Shannon, on which ran a level and handsome gravel-walk. The river, at the distance of a mile and a half above the town, is grand and majestic beyond any thing we had seen in Ireland, and scarcely, if at all, inferior to the Thames at Putney. Level and fine meadows, in which they were still making hay, spread every where to the margin of the water opposite to us on our left, whilst on the right appeared, surrounded by groves, rich agriculture, and numerous handsome country-seats. Above them,

the ruins of Newcastle, a castle where King William stationed himself, when besieging that city, whose misfortunes I have just related.

This beautiful walk along the Shannon cannot be surpassed, and, I think, scarcely paralleled anywhere. At length we crossed a ferry, three miles from Limerick, and entering the county of Clare, had a long walk through a very flat country. In the neighbourhood of Doonass we found many poor cottages, in which fever was making uncontrouled ravages. The poor people came from their doors, and asked if we were physicians; and seemed in extreme misery, dreading the approach of winter; and sinking, unassisted, under sickness. They were tenants of Sir Hugh Massey, but he was abroad. We promised to mention their deplorable situation at some gentleman's house, and, if possible, procure them medicine.

From these humble abodes of wretchedness, we pressed on, till we found ourselves again in the neighbourhood of the Shannon. Directed by the people (who were very obliging) to turn to the right, near some slated cottages of Sir Hugh Massey's, and pursue our path along the river to Alderman Vincent's, we suddenly opened on scenes to which it is impossible to do justice by painting or description. The Shannon spread his blue waters, sparkling in the sun, in the manner of a lake, encompassed by varying woods,

and little lawns, and verdant hills; and as we walked the romantic path we had discovered in Sir H. Massey's delightful demesnes, this noble river foamed at our side, and covered the brown rocks and hanging shrubs with his spray.

As we advanced, Lord Massey's house appeared on a gentle declivity, embowered in trees, and highly adorning the picture. The river, widening as we passed, delighted through the picturesque and wooded way, every moment promised greater beauties, and always surpassed the promise, until reaching the foot of a ruined tower, the salmon-leap, composed of great ledges of rock, and the deservedly celebrated Falls of Doonass, surprized us, by a view far transcending expectation, fully rewarding the toil of the day, and presenting to our eyes such exquisite natural beauty as we had not before beheld. The Falls of Doonass are an interruption of the navigation of the Shannon, by ledges of rocks and shoal-water, on gravelly flats. The current at the salmon-leap, and above it, is very strong, and the angry river seems gathering in his rage at the interposed delay, as he prepares to burst along. His waves dash in tumultuous conflict, and whiten in the sun's rays; then hurry on, and sweeping through the scattered and opposing rocks, hurries with him our affrighted senses, and hardly permits the anxious breath to

be drawn. In more tranquil sports the attentive anglers were casting their long lines.

On the opposite meadows, the peaceful sheep heeded not this princely river's fury; and below the Falls small wooded-isles, or promontories, smiled on its exhausted powers, and dipt in its smooth surface the branches and many-tinted leaves of their trees! The ruined tower I mentioned commands the finest view in the world of picturesque beauty.

Following our path through this noble place of Sir Hugh Massey's, we had a good view of a very fine mansion-house and beautiful grounds, where hay-making diversified and animated every spot. Continuing our way, the Shannon became quite tranquil, and flowed within its regular bounds. Its glassy bosom was smooth and unruffled. Villa after villa ornamented the opposite side, and our path, over-hung by magnificent trees, presented fresh charms, until Mr. Vincent's delightful mansion, seated on a lawn gently sloping to the water-edge, met our sight. Although gratified to the utmost degree by all we had just seen, we were happy to have a prospect of repose in so sweet a spot, as our fatigue had been very great, and the distance to Doonass far exceeded our calculation. In the elegant mansion of Alderman Vincent we met from himself and family a most hospitable reception,

and gladly accepted an invitation to dinner. Mr. Vincent manifested all that genuine urbanity which distinguishes Irish gentlemen so highly, and very politely shewed us his choice collection of pictures; but we sought the "bard of Kilcolman" in vain. The collection is, however, rare, and well deserves inspection. They were brought from Germany, and came to Mr. V. in part liquidation of a debt due by a friend now no more. There are many good portraits—one, said to be of Oliver Cromwell; several scripture and historic pieces of merit, and others of rural and domestic life, well delineated. An elegant repast, good wine, and Mr. Vincent's cheerful and instructive conversation, made the termination of our walk very pleasing. The situation of Alderman V.'s house is perfectly beautiful. The Shannon flows past its lawn in great beauty! Castle Connel, a very pretty village, where there is a good spa, stands on the opposite side, and the whole country round resembles a fine garden interspersed with villas, farm-houses, and woods.

Having recommended the poor cottagers ill of the fever to this benevolent family, who have assisted many around in such situations, we took our leave, as the declining sun warned us that we must resume our path. Again we winded along its meandering way, and passed Sir H. Massey's mansion: again the mighty torrent began to foam and shake; and, again, the Falls of

toned through the distant air, seemed the call to war, and heroic deeds of a great and valorous people; or, assuming softer tones, invited to gay revelling, the merry dance, and the sportive joys of love! Who could fail to think he heard the venerable harp accompanying these evening hymns? Who could forbear to rush into the mists of antiquity to find the people who formed, who cultivated, who listened to such music?—How pleased, too, one is, to leave modern history for these fascinating visions of peace and joy, which will rise up in deeply considering of the remote times of Erin's early sons! The kind delusion soothes the soul; and, far from inspiring envy, or discontent, one rejoices if numbers in former days have enjoyed so much happiness, and one hopes that genial conciliation and internal peace gradually approaches to renew and realize other scenes of joy and peace! How I long to see the merry dance, and the rural groupes of the redressed and happy Irish!—the light feet beating gaily responsive to their own lively planxties, and a government of strength and concord, needing no expensive armies, no unconstitutional bills, looking with pleased security on their happy subjects! Is it much to expect this from an enlightened senate, and ministers of elevated and liberal minds? Is it not thus they will discover how to avert the foreigner, and render our empire immortal?

Limerick, Sept. 7, 1817.

This day, by attendance on divine service, we had an opportunity of seeing the cathedral of *Limerick*. It is one of the finest old buildings in the island, and was erected in 1207, by Donald O'Brien, then King of Limerick. This gothic pile is in good preservation, and highly worthy the traveller's inspection. The congregration of Protestants is small. There are numerous chapels of the Catholics in this city, attended by a vast population. The dissenters are not numerous. We saw a new Catholic chapel, just finished in a very handsome Gothic manner, which ornaments the new city very much. There is considerable harmony between Catholics and Protestants here, as well as in Cork, though the corporate, and exclusive system, is certainly injurious to it. Here too, as in that city, contested elections have been carried on with great animation, to open the representation.

We inspected, at our leisure, the handsome public-buildings—the custom-house, court-house, and jail; as also the spacious streets of the new city, crowded with genteel well-dressed people. We have viewed Thomond-bridge, with its fourteen arches, narrow, but still strong, and built above six hundred years. The shipping on the quays makes a very pleasing appearance; but trade has suffered here as well as every place;

and the great projected improvements on them, and in the upper part of the new city, are greatly checked. The tide reaches above the bridge more than sixty miles from the sea. Female beauty has been much and deservedly celebrated in Limerick. On Sundays there is a great display of it, as well as consummate elegance and taste in the dress of the ladies. The great cities of Munster, which we have now seen—of Waterford, Cork, and Limerick, offer to the stranger's eye, in this respect, a very fascinating picture. Indeed, so much of graceful and genteel appearance in both sexes, of all the better classes, as present itself in these cities, make the most favourable impression on the mind. Such appearance could not exist without a great deal of mental excellence and superiority. In fact, in this, as in several other respects, the Irish, in a great measure, resemble the French. They have more personal beauty, however, than the latter, and the men have more strength, with equal activity. No traveller can observe their great cities without admiring the striking natural endowments of a population so great and so vivacious!

The neighbourhood of Limerick is rendered beautiful by the Clare mountains terminating many fine landscapes, in which the Shannon, flowing through a fertile and ornamented country, forms the chief feature. This evening we saw

them to great advantage from those admired meadows of which I have been speaking. We concluded the day by visiting them after dinner. The sun was declining, but sufficiently high to spread his golden hues over them. Patches of cultivation distinctly marked their verdant and sloping sides. We saw the peasant's mountain cots plainly; the quiet smoke, harbinger of humble joy, just newly rising from them and stealing to the clouds. The Shannon was hid from our view by intervening banks; but the gliding and numerous sails, following in gentle succession, pointed plainly where our favourite river pursued his way to the ocean. This scene was not, as recently, enlivened by the labourer's evening-song, but its mild glories will not easily be eradicated from our memories. We left it not till the orb of day sunk in the distant wave, and the indistinct sails of boats and vessels faded from our sight.

Limerick, Sept. 8, 1817.

This morning, my dear L., I devoted to the peculiar purpose of paying homage to the castle where the magnanimous William chiefly resided whilst besieging this city, forty years after it had surrendered to General Ireton. When the first rays of early dawn appeared I left Limerick, and very soon came in sight of Newcastle, which is almost a mile and a half from this city, and seated near the Dublin road. We had been

shewn a few days ago, by a gentleman of Limerick, the part of the Shannon where William crossed, and I seized the opportunity, before we left this, of hastening to this castle. It stands on a gently-declining hill, commanding a fine view of the city and the Shannon. The shell of this venerable building is considerable and lofty. At the very same period of the year and month, King William inhabited these now ruined and lonely walls. I found a seat in one of the arched windows, and had full leisure for reflection. The cold September breeze brushed past the shrubs and weeds, and, on a neighbouring tree, the plaintive robin sung his mournful appeal to winter! Here many cares devoured the royal hero, who fought, not as the gloomy Ireton, for the advantage of a sanguinary party,—who contended, not as the despotic and implacable Kinuncini, for the vindictive triumphs of foreign bigotry,—not, as the three Stuarts, for narrow and corrupt despotism,—not as the leader of any party,—but who was the father of his people and guardian of the constitution!—who here struggled for the empire; and, for public good, near this castle, risked life itself!

The tomb has long covered him, my dear L.; but such a man can never die! Happy for Limerick, had she rightly appreciated the hero's value; and, by gracious and speedy surrender, conciliated his best affections! She might have

possessed, within her walls, the head of the whole empire, and obtained for herself and Ireland a compact, signed by his own hand, which would have tranquillized, and secured the country!

The feeble tyrant, James, had fled. "Pardon our errors, and be our king," were the words which policy, good sense, and religion, dictated! —From this castle, where now I ruminate on the afflicting past, the royal warrior would have replied, "Come to my arms; embrace me, my children." But the armed satellites of Louis the Fourteenth were in the unfortunate city; of that foreign despot, whose great aim was to prevent concord in this great empire! In a fatal hour, and contrary to the general opinion in Limerick, the opinions of the French commanders and of Sarsefield prevailed.

The country which once introduces a foreign force, against a just and lawful government, obtains temporary masters, who will never make a good capitulation for her interests. It was the interest of William, and of the Irish Catholics in Limerick, to make immediate and lasting peace. That of France was to keep alive a lingering war. William had hoped the French would have retired. His affairs in England, and on the Continent, called him away. But Louis dreaded the champion of freedom re-appearing in either! Delay was something to the wily king; and a

lucky ball, (more fortunate than that directed against him at the Boyne,) might remove his formidable adversary for ever! It was, therefore, the policy of the French king to dupe the Irish to the last. Thus William was detained in this venerable castle, (where I sit, and whence I write to you, my dear L.,) as Henry the Second was in Leinster, anxious to make a general pacification, and to give a good constitution, and equal laws to all Ireland; and, like him, was at length hurried away by foreign and domestic affairs, whilst this island, in either case, was deprived of golden moments, and consigned to ruin.

I left the castle oppressed with painful feeling, and wandered on every spot around where I supposed the immortal hero had paused to view Limerick, before I took my leave of the place where this good and great man had sojourned. It was a pleasing change to visit the adjoining race-grounds and the turret above them. The extensive and admirable view from it was well-fitted to banish disagreeable thoughts. I have never seen any thing in England superior. I cannot say how much of Munster and Connaught is seen from this eminence; but a great portion of Clare, Tipperary, and Limerick, certainly are. The noble Shannon spreading, winding through, and fertilizing an immense tract of the richest country, displayed its stream to unspeakable advantage. A vast range of mountains, extending

to the counties of Galway and Tipperary, swept around. Many noble mansions and fine woods enlivened this delightful panorama. The view is, indeed, transcendently beautiful. We arrived in time for breakfast at our inn. I am truly, &c. &c.

LETTER X.

Limerick, Sept. 10, 1817.

MY DEAR L.

You are aware that the articles of Limerick were solemnly confirmed and ratified at Westminster, by the King and Queen of England. By the surrender of this city to General Ginkle, a great positive good was obtained for England. The designs of France were frustrated, her party extinguished, and the glorious revolution of 1688 then, and not till then, finally completed! Till that event took place, the crown was not firmly placed on the head of William; the theatre for foreigners, for mal-contents, (English, Irish, or Scotch) was kept open, and opportunity afforded for the renewed exertions of the heroic valour and extraordinary genius of this people! From this compact, England immediately received stipulated and expected benefits. The law of nations

cannot be weaker than the municipal and civil law, which requires, where the valuable consideration be given *bona fide*, that the terms of every contract shall be rigidly fulfilled. This principle is, in fact, at the same moment, the fundamental legislative points of all societies, and cannot be violated without injuring their stability. The surrender of Limerick, in 1691, wisely considered, was the consummation of all the toils of England to civilize Ireland. Henry the Second, surrounded by Irish princes and chieftains, a brave army, and himself one of the most powerful monarchs of Europe, could not have desired more. The pacification of Ireland permitted William to pursue his foreign wars, and to firmly establish himself in England: two points necessary for the completion of the revolution of 1688. The surrender of this noble city ensured them. Henry obtained but the obedience of a small province; William the full dominion of this island by his treaty. The consequence of the English crown was much augmented in Europe, by the success of either king in Ireland, but incomparably more by William's final triumph there, than by the partial acquisition of the Second Henry. William, in the small principality of Holland, made a glorious stand against French despotism in Europe; but, at the head of all the British isles, where the surrender of Limerick placed him, his rank and power became

commanding and terrific. The boon the king gave was small. He granted to his Irish subjects what his Scotch had secured for themselves in the reign of Charles the First; and his English had taken, in that of Henry the Eighth, liberty of conscience, with security of property!

Peace smiled on the whole empire within, and Europe looked awe-struck on these isles. A party, in England, blighted their fair and smiling promise of harvest, and debarred them of its plenteous fruits. Blind to the great truth, that without civil and religious immunities no colony, or allied nation, ever produces faithful subjects to the parent state; or, regardless of consequences to posterity, the ruling faction, influenced by its connections in Ireland, and by a narrow antipathy to Catholics, caused the flagitious and unprincipled violation of the articles of Limerick. They did not replace the Irish in their former position, but retained the valuable consideration, whilst they cancelled the agreement. Never did British honour suffer so much, and never was worse policy engrafted on a more faithless deed. The country party, which had introduced William, had founded their procedings on a hatred of arbitrary power; but, in this instance, exercised a purely despotic will; and, though themselves champions of liberty, emulated the cruel act of the revocation of the edict of Nantz by Louis the

Fourteenth. The patriot, or whig parties, of succeeding reigns, continued to aggravate the criminality of this memorable infraction, by enacting repeated laws against Catholics, through the temporary ministries and governments of the day, until the bowed spirits of the Irish had nothing left but God, and the memory of the past, to console or sustain it! Nor did this much aggrieved race dare to raise their heads, till his present majesty, with a soul above all factions,—a freedom from prejudice, like the immortal William himself,—and a calm disdain of the enactments and oppressions of the patriot parties of preceding reigns,—recalled to mind the broken and violated treaty of Limerick; and, gathering its mouldering fragments,—resolved, in part, to redeem the honour of the crown, and pour balm on this ill-used and wretched land!

It has been truly pleasing, my dear L., to find, in all our walks hitherto, the name of his majesty venerated, as the first great benefactor of Ireland since the times of Elizabeth. Is not this a grateful reward for the just king?—honorable to him, and to those who bestow it?—What gem sparkles in the crown so bright as that of justice?—What office so glorious for the royal hand, as to raise the afflicted from the earth, to tear from his weak limbs the rusty chain, and, telling him to breathe his native air without far-

ther terrors, to place on his up-raised forehead the stamp of freedom!—But there yet remains a great deal to be done.

Happily the late revolutionary ruler of France had not the wily perseverance of Louis the Fourteenth, or understood, like him, the nature of its parties, and this vulnerable part of the empire, as he did: he knew not, like him, to fan here the sparks of discontent into dangerous flames; but, crude in his conceptions, and acrimonious and hasty in temper, often decided through ill-founded disgust, and mistook the dictum of his own ignorance for the voice of intuition, or of judgment. He despised the Irish, and would not risk an army, or officers here; and, to the circumstance of such a character reigning in France in the late war, it may be attributed, that Limerick was not again made the focus of civil war, and the Shannon a channel for foreign troops. Had that person read history, and profited by it,—had he studied the records of the "Bureau des affaires étrangeres" with care, and had as well appreciated the Irish character as the generals of Louis the Fourteenth,—strange scenes might have presented themselves, and many a statesman been not a little embarrassed in our empire. But, like James the Second, the late French governor doubted the courage and firmness of Irishmen, and sent no St. Ruth to fortify the

western side of the Shannon, and seize on Limerick!

The capitulation of Limerick forms an era, from whence a century has flowed, full of real danger to the empire. A revolution in England, which established the laws and constitution so nobly, was, however, very imperfect as to the empire which left Ireland without the just benefits of either! Had William and his parliament, on the fall of Limerick, confirmed and improved the articles then granted, the whole fabric of the great edifice had been completed and strengthened. The Union of 1800 has not yet repaired these fatal errors. The great minister who formed it made a compact with the Protestant party of Ireland only, and left the question of the violated articles of this city, from whence I write, untouched. The difficulties of that Union seem to me to arise from attempting to mix the English and Irish constitutions together. The English parliament and government cannot admit Catholics, it is said, with propriety, and adherence to their fundamental laws; but no objection of this kind could have been applied to an Irish parliament and ministry. At Limerick, in 1691, the Catholics asked or thought of no admission to the English parliament. Mr. Pitt, whose prodigious struggles latterly against French despotism I cannot sufficiently admire, proposed the intermingling of Irish with English gentle-

men in parliament, at London, as a good way of softening party-fury on Irish questions, and with considerable reason. But he either contemplated the perpetual exclusion of Irish Catholic gentry, or he did not. If he did, he treated the Catholic body with cruelty and duplicity,—if he did not, it became him to shew how they might be admitted without infringing the constitution of 1688, in England. And, if he could not prove their admissibility, or meant their exclusion, it had been better to have formed no Union, rather than a very unsatisfactory one! But it is so unpleasing to censure a noble and departed character, that I rather impute to Mr. Pitt the hope that the prejudices of England would give way, if an Union gave her more ease in governing Ireland, than I do wrong designs or egregious mistake. That experiment, however, will not, I fear, unless much amended, be able to encounter the hazards another continental war may bring, as it is attended by many and dangerous inconveniences, as well as by great apparent good. Like the treaty at Limerick, it is but a covenant fulfilled only on one side. You will see, my dear L., how I have fallen into political remarks.

The history of this city is so important, and the last capitulation bears to this day so much upon the consideration of Ireland's political con-

stitution, that I am naturally led into them. If the Union of 1800 seems to me a very feeble mode of harmonizing Ireland, without thoroughly repairing the national crime of violated faith in 1691, I, who have no minister or party to please, but have seen a great deal of Ireland, and have seriously observed the vast strength of her people, may venture to say so. The bulk of the Irish nation was omitted in Mr. Pitt's treaty of 1800 with the parliament in Dublin, and in 1691 it was defrauded of its rights. The revolution of 1688 was not intended to give liberty to England, and take it altogether from Ireland. Artful and prejudiced men have perverted it to that purpose; but the spirit of those times went quite another way. William certainly came not as an oppressor to Ireland. How she is to be redressed is now a difficult question. Far from entering into a subject, chiefly fit for ministers and princes, I drop the pen; but, doing so, add, that they will not be justified in remaining stationary, or waiting "till they can see their way," least the storms and waves of time may arise, and, beating on the weak part of our great vessel, the planks may give way, and every pump be exerted in vain! To-morrow, I think, will be our last day in Limerick; and, small as the pedestrian's preparations are, they now compel me to lay aside my paper.

Limerick.

You will readily believe, my dear L., that I am no speculative reformer, forming visions out of unreal things, and fancying men fit for Utopian scenes. The orators and advocates of the Catholic cause, in and out of parliament, have argued too much in the wild fields of abstract right, and universal toleration, to satisfy my understanding in regard to the state of this country. The sublime and eloquent Rousseau can well describe what man ought to be, or might be; but the pedestrian, who sees the community in its undress, and observes its various passions and prejudices, will be sure rather to take man as he is, and as he actually stands, in relation to others; he endeavours to find what, thus viewed, he wants, or is fit for, without the injury of others, or derangement of the state. In going so much among them, as we have done in the country, we find the people at large possessed of no fantastic ideas, or schemes of change, which too often are the children of revenge and disappointment. In all I write relative to Ireland, I have in view the just interests of the whole community, and wish for adjustment of its parts in a plain old-fashioned manner, without partial preference of any.

History is less a guide to declaimers than their own passions; but the one produces facts, the

other assertions. Since his majesty's accession, the Protestant whig-party raised up ideas of false grandeur in Ireland, gratifying to themselves, but injurious to England, yet without a word of the capitulation of Limerick. In more recent times, it has grown fashionable to defend the Catholics, but with palpable neglect of our more ancient history. The true ground to have taken, was the proffer of Henry the Second, viz.—*British laws and liberties to Irish subjects.*

In the reigns of Henry the Third, Edward the First, Edward the Third, and Richard the Second, the people of Ireland often and respectfully petitioned the throne for the fulfilment of the second Henry's bond. The distractions of civil war suspended the claim. The sagacious Henry the Seventh admitted it. The despotic reigns of Henry the Eighth, Mary, Elizabeth, and of the Stuarts, created a fearful anarchy in Ireland, which left little room for political adjustment. These monarchs wished to new-model Ireland, without regard to circumstances,—one set of them to make it Protestant,—another Catholic,—bnt none acted on the good old plan of their great predecessor in Ireland, to receive all subjects under English protection, and equally imparted laws. William came as the great mediator between all the Irish subjects, and at the surrender of Limerick a balance among them was formed.

Unfortunately, we see that the friends of freedom in England, in 1691, were the advocates of slavery in Ireland, and it was overset. A temperate and respectful setting forth before parliament of the expediency and propriety of re-adjusting it, and giving this country, in all its parts, rational independence, such as Henry the Second, as Edward the First, and as the hero of Poictiers and Cressy meditated in periods of leisure to have bestowed, must, long ago, have done much to meliorate things between Ireland and England. But the pleading of the cause has been mismanaged, and the tribunal which was to decide has been irritated, insulted, and menaced, when it should have been informed, persuaded, and, if possible, convinced! If Irish Catholics be now discontented, they have their own parliamentary and other advocates to blame, rather than an august parliament, and a great and generous country; they have their own impetuosity to lament, and the vague and chimerical colouring put on their claims, to deplore: from an illustrious prince they certainly had cause for hoping more speedy benevolent aid; but they ought not to despair of receiving it, though it come tardily.

The Catholics have more to do. They should convince the Protestants of Ireland of the sincerity and liberality of their affection, and disprove all wish for superiority and violent assumption of

power. In the counties, they should act on all these grounds, and cease to have the illusive form of a council in the metropolis, which, however composed of talent, learning, and genius, cannot stand in lieu of the whole people, uttering to England the simple unadulterated language of the heart, and imploring, on the tomb of Henry the Second, the privileges he intended for all his subjects of Ireland. They may be heard, through counsel, at the bar of the Houses of Commons and Lords. Their petitions should be quite different from those of recent years,—founded on expediency,—historic matter well reasoned, and equally free from visionary ideas, or bombastic language. They ought to be persuaded they cannot advance by menace, and may alienate by avowed antipathy.

I write these free sentiments to you, my dear L. You like discussion. I shall never insult you as an Englishman oppressing this country, but rather endeavour to win your understanding, to pardon its numerous errors, through the immensity of its suffering, and the long delay of its relief. They are sentiments which no party or prince could purchase, but I hope, in some degree, they will be found worthy your truly enlightened and liberal mind. They spring from faithful observation of a whole people, and if they be erroneous, may at least lead others to something new and better. For, as I said in a late letter,

in allusion to the local peculiarities of Ireland, that things cannot go on as they are, so I may repeat of political and greater matters.

No theories of reform are wanting here; some plain, practical good, dispensed by your prince and parliament, now having leisure, in time of peace, will make this island very happy, and render her a steady ally to your throne in times of convulsion abroad, or amongst yourselves at home. But I sincerely hope that the royal personage at the head of affairs will feel that continual delay may be interpreted, with some plausibility, into desertion of the oppressed, and may hereafter cast a shade over his brightest glories; and that your minister, whose equanimity and powerful understanding all unprejudiced men must greatly admire, will reflect, that his noble termination of war will want half its merit, if he does not embody in his unclouded mind every petition of the Irish since the days of Henry the Third, and, expanding his views, become himself their advocate, and the accomplisher of general harmony at home. Difficulties should not deter him in the godlike cause, and the approbation of every good man in the empire will hail his steps. Such a man ought not to regard place or power, but as instrumental for public good. If he once clearly discern the latter to be inseparably united with grand, effectual, and speedy relief for Ireland, he will not hesitate.

As we are going to take our last walk near Limerick, and the day is extremely fine, I shall conclude, and dispatch this letter, which I fear you have already thought too long.

I am, &c. &c.

LETTER XI.

Limerick, Sept. 11, 1817.

MY DEAR L.

Our walk yesterday carried us into the county of Clare, and across Thomond-bridge, which gives some painful recollections of the brave fellows who perished on it at the great siege by General Ginkle. I am sorry to write that the distress of the country augments. We hear of fever everywhere around, and it is scarcely safe to go into or near any cottage.

As we were admiring a fine prospect of the country and the Shannon yesterday, a very pallid and weak man came out of a cottage near us, about twelve feet square. He was recovering from fever. He told us his story. "Three or four years ago, he possessed, with some of his family, a good farm of fifty acres. Before the lease expired, it was taken over his head, at a rent of five or six pounds the acre, by a monied

land-jobber. He was compelled to leave it, and become a common labourer. Distress and poverty had since almost worn himself and little family from the earth. He had long been ill of the prevailing fever, but was now convalescent."

What! a land-system everywhere? and how culpable were many landlords and great farmers to encourage it. But when we admit the leading feature of the age to be *love of money*, our wonder will instantly cease. The prevailing sentiment we now almost daily hear, is, "No matter how "it is, the poor must suffer;" but unmixed with acrimony; for the resignation of this people under want, and every species of misery, is admirable. They feel practically, if they do not understand historically, how long they have been held in mournful degradation; and they mean to convey to a person of genteel appearance, the touching remark, that their deliverance from long-enduring sorrow is still delayed. A deep and melancholy tone often accompanies the remark I mention, and which we have a thousand times heard with but small variation.

We saw, on our last walk, the house of the person's family who shewed King William the ford across the Shannon. It is solitary and old. The man obtained a grant of lands, which his family hold to this day, but the superstitious people think they have not thriven on the estate.

The Shannon looked extremely beautiful yes-

terday, and we saw it to great advantage by visiting a charming small island which is in it, about two miles from Limerick inland. On this, Mr. Tuthill, who has contended for the honour of representing Limerick in the Imperial Parliament, occasionally resides, in a most commodious and elegant villa, placed in the midst of a garden, washed by the Shannon's lovely waves. This gentleman had the kindness to favour us with a view of his delightful residence. His unaffected politeness made us enjoy our little excursion very much. The view upwards, on the enchanting Shannon, cannot be excelled. His verdant banks, covered with cattle, and adorned by charming villas at intervals (whilst William's ruined castle in the distance crowned the bewitching scene), filled us with admiration.

Mr. T. informed us an action had been fought on this island, as bones were frequently discovered, and that a covered-way had formerly existed. I omitted to ask him if General Ginkle had crossed here, or in what part. The ford William crossed is in view of this island, which forms the most pleasing retreat imaginable. Mr. T.'s gardens and green-houses are very elegant; genuine taste pervades them and the house. To complete the beauty of the Shannon here, a tree has grown about half a mile from Mr. T.'s island, in its centre, on a rocky, or hard spot, and has a singular and pleasing effect.

We left this island, and its hospitable possessor, with regret. Never have I seen a residence more formed for happy repose and study. It invites, and almost compels the mind to reflection; and as its access is only by means of occasional cots, which are used by fishermen with singular dexterity in the rapid and often impetuously-violent stream of the Shannon, there can be little or no interruption to meditation or business here, or to the occasional enjoyment of select society. We returned to Limerick partly along the Shannon, and having now seen all its environs, and made the most interesting researches we could, propose to leave it early to-morrow morning.

I forgot to mention that I have seen the Bishop of Limerick, whose learning, benevolence, and suavity of manners, do honour to his station. His lordship stated to me, that the magnitude of the present distress, in and about Limerick, was beyond conception, and that every one's private funds for charity were nearly exhausted. He appeared pleased with the idea of our tour, which proposed to combine utility with something of literature, and gave it the encouragement of a liberal mind, feeling well-disposed to any thing which might, in a rational manner, tend to better the condition of Ireland. Nor did we omit visiting the Catholic prelate of this great city, a most amiable and respectable character

also. He corroborated all the statement of Dr. Warburton, as to the general suffering, and none can know it better than the Catholic clergy.

The fever-hospital begins to be crowded, and it is to be feared this populous city will afford it innumerable patients. Many of the inferior Catholic ecclesiastics have fallen victims to the conscientious discharge of their duty in visiting the dying.

Accounts have also reached Limerick of the lamented death of Judge Osborn, and of Mr. Ridgeway, a barrister, both most worthy and highly-endowed characters. The judge, on returning from circuit, took his crier (who had grown ill) into his own carriage. Alas! by this act of humanity, he lost his life. He took the fever, and never recovered. But round the couch of this dying judge, eminent for his talents, benevolence, and piety, hovered applauding angels! and the hand of Heaven, which recalled him hence, smoothed the sufferer's brow as he departed!

As this pestilence has raged above three months, I could not forbear transmitting to the Irish government an account of the misery arising from it which we have already witnessed on our tour, and a plan for establishing fever-hospitals in remote or mountainous districts, where dispensary, hospital, nor apothecary, are to be seen. I am quite sure, my dear L., that all smaller considerations of roads or works should give way to

the promptest and most vigorous ideas of checking this fatal malady; nor is there any ground to suppose that government will not adopt every precaution, and use every exertion. Already they have done much in Dublin. I feel deeply for the sufferers in the country parts from fever; they may not, however, know the extent of it. I fear we shall have further communications to make, as we are determined not to relax in any of the objects of our walk.

At this moment, when my mind's eye runs over the vast population of this island, in villages, towns, and cities,—in vallies, and on mountain sides,—in glens, and on wild heath, and commons of nature,—I shudder at the varied and complicated scenes of wretchedness which may be now existing in them! At this period of the pestilence, the grasping hand of death may be in some measure stayed. What pure and lasting happiness shall I not feel, my dear L., if our pedestrian labours in the south and west of Ireland, humble as they are, shall in any way help to alleviate the sorrows of thousands! The government, I know, feel deeply and rightly for this unfortunate country, under its present suffering from fever, and is composed of many persons of humanity, as well as great talents, and, I think, will not overlook information on the most interesting of all subjects touching the health and lives of so many fellow-creatures.

In our rural walk, I want neither to intrude nor dictate, but, pursuing our laborious and diversified way, to perform to government and people a sacred duty, as far as lies in my power.

I shall now close this short letter. To-morrow we enter Connaught, according to the old division by Queen Elizabeth (and indeed to that of nature), though by some freak of geography, Clare has been since given to Munster.

Believe me, &c. &c.

LETTER XII.

Newmarket on Ferg, Co. of Clare, Sept. 12, 1817.

MY DEAR L.

THIS morning we left the memorable city of Limerick. Our last view from the end of Thomond-bridge was very fine. The walls and towers, venerably picturesque, and still very lofty, hang over the Shannon's azure waves, as the city and distant shipping formed a noble picture to the right. The Shannon yields to none of the rivers of Ireland in the beauty of his colour. To-day it looks as blue, and much grander than the Seine at Paris.

As we proceeded, the Clare mountains rose, and spread with many charms before us; light

shadows, and yellow patches of grain, marked their green sides, as a graceful waving line terminated their summits. The road proved level and good, having these mountains on the right, and the Shannon at a distance on the left. Our way ran through fine meadows, spreading a great expanse of verdure, to the river; and as we began to ascend, a vast amphitheatre of mountains met the eye. The opposite banks of the prince of streams appeared, covered with rich woods, mansions, and here and there a towering and ruined castle. As we arrived at Crattogh-woods, we seemed lost in the picturesque of Wales, and a charming cottage nestling in them, completed the illusion. From a small chapel near, there is a prodigious fine view of the Shannon, enriched by surrounding scenery, on which the pleased eye dwells with rapture!

The day proved very fine, and the harvest went on merrily in every field. We saw many fine crops of wheat and oats. Reaping and haymaking employed every busy hand, and the joyous laugh, and jocund Irish song, frequently struck our ears. We did not perceive as much flax as we wished.

Carrick, a Gallian castle, makes a very noble object on the other side the Shannon in this walk, as well as the seats of Colonel Moncell, Mr. Irving, and Mr. Cowper.

It is quite impossible to do justice, my dear L.,

to the riches and grandeur of these landscapes by any description. Again floated through my busy mind, an early aboriginal period, when harvest, as now—

> "Crown'd with the sickle, and the wheaten sheaf
> Came nodding on,"——

And the fervent prayer swelled in my breast, that other golden times may come for these poor people amongst whom we walk.

Directed to avoid the six-mile bridge-road, we turned to the left in our progress to Newmarket, and from an eminence beheld, at the end of a great plain, chiefly fine meadow, Bunratty-castle, an ancient seat of the O'Briens. New and beautiful glimpses of the Shannon shone in the rays of the sun, and the venerable building, once possessed by a royal house, gave high interest to the picture before us. The Kerry and Limerick mountains rose in the far distant back-ground. Numerous and handsome seats continued to adorn the noble river, which was winding his way to the ocean, increasing in grandeur and breadth, and accompanying us on this enchanting walk.

Bunratty-castle is an ancient pile, of much grandeur. Its front is enclosed between two high square towers,—wooded hills ascend behind. The kings of Munster once resided occasionally there; perhaps, too, the truly renowned and royal hero, Brian Borom.

Hay-making proceeded on all sides, as we approached the castle, and caused a very cheerful appearance in its vicinity. We were very politely permitted, by Mr. Stoddert, who resides in it, to view the interior, which is exceedingly venerable. A great hall, or dining-room, arched with stone, in a very perfect manner, is still quite entire.

The evening began to fall. We left Bunratty filled with respect for an ancient pile, which, though shorn of royal splendour, was deserving attention, as the proud record of Ireland's ancient times! Many of Munster's kings were learned and illustrious men, and occasionally threw gleams of glory on ferocious ages.

We were obliged to make a rapid progress to Newmarket, continuing it through a fine country. The Shannon had far withdrawn, and his charming landscapes no more allured us on our way; but the wonderful beauty we had been surveying all day, dwelt in our remembrance.

We reached Newmarket on Ferg late, and a good deal fatigued; but this our first pleasing entrance into what we consider Connaught, had so very much gratified us, that we thought our labour well bestowed. From Limerick and its vicinity we perceived the tone of speaking to alter, and become a great deal less disagreeable than that of Munster, as also the manners of the people to grow milder.

At Newmarket we discovered an excellent

small inn, beautifully situated at the extremity of the village. We met at it good accommodation of every kind, and a respectable hostess and her daughter, who used every effort to render us comfortable, and to give and procure for us every possible information. As these are attentions pedestrians do not always receive at the head inns in Ireland, they were the more agreeable to us.

Though the unrivalled beauties of the way had so much pleased us, a walk of sixteen or seventeen Irish miles did not fail to be felt, and made the reception we met with from Mrs. Serjeant, our worthy landlady, very welcome. To pedestrians, such a circumstance is often of great consequence, and contributes much to their progress the following day. A refreshing repose, in excellent beds, made us quite alert the succeeding morning. In dressing I perceived, for the first time, and at the stables of our inn, a kind of horse-police, facetiously called, by the Irish—*Peelers*, from the secretary's name who has introduced them, in hope of tranquillizing a country which, alas! my dear L., is already but too much burthened by expensive establishments, and whose agriculture can scarcely bear two years more the rents and imposts it is loaded with! These police are paid by the baronies, or parishes, where they are quartered, in case of turbulence; and the expence, we are told, in some

places, amounts to eight or ten shillings the acre. They have been of considerable service, it is said, in several parts of this county, and if the objection as to laying another burthen on the land could be avoided, might for some time be a valuable and unexceptionable aid to the magistrates. I apprehend, such expensive establishments must go a great way to absorb revenue, and can no more restrain a great population than the chains Xerxes ordered to be thrown into the sea could the Hellespont. The expence of one of these flying corps of Peelers is not less than £ 4,000 in a district annually.

The situation of our inn proved as beautiful in the morning as our reception the night before had been agreeable. Mrs. ——, our landlady's daughter, shewed us some prospects near the house, which were very fine. We again recognized the far-distant Shannon, winding through a continued landscape. Newmarket on Ferg, (which being prettily seated on an inlet of the Shannon, is so called) has suffered dreadfully from the fever. At this town, and in its neighbourhood, it has, until this last week, raged like a plague. "We knew not," said our pleasing and intelligent guide, Mrs. ——, "in the morning, of what death we should hear; or, at night, "who could be said to lie down in safety. Funerals were frequent, and mourning in every "house. But when we were almost in despair,

"the hand of God arrested this malady, and we "are now tolerably free from it."

The death of Miss Colpoys, a most amiable and benevolent young lady, residing near Newmarket, has been universally lamented. She caught this direful fever by ministering to the wants of the poor, and giving them food with her own hands. In a week she was no more! Young and charming, she fell an early victim to her humanity! The Catholic bishop, who is a most worthy and dignified character, near this, has just lost, by the same cruel disease, a beloved nephew, of high respectability, and the father of a young family. When such characters fall, what must be the fate of the wretched inhabitants of the mud-walled cottages we have seen in Clare! and in and near this village! It is from such abodes of poverty that this pestilence emanates—it is in them it lurks,—and from their inmates is infection so often personally caught. I do not know if any more recent instance of plague occurs than that in 1690 and 91, (of which Ireton died at Limerick) so general and fatal as the present disorder!

However pleased we are with this inn, and the fine country which smiles round it, you will not wonder that our feelings have been peculiarly saddened at Newmarket on Ferg. It is but lately that the horrors of famine pressed the poor people down, and nearly drove them to deeds of

desperation! Mrs. —— told us a pleasant anecdote of their folly some months ago, when tumultuously assembling to procure food in any manner they could. A worthy clergyman, who had a pretty villa near our inn, diverted himself by lighting up a summer-house and some surrounding palisades, in manner of fortifications, with gas-lights; and, on particular nights, discharging muskets and small cannon! A party of the starving people had resolved (on one of his state rejoicing-nights) to go to Dromoland, and seize all the provisions they could in Sir Edward O'Brien's absence. They proceeded to the number of several hundreds; but seeing the gas-lights, and hearing some firing, they turned, fled, and dispersed! I am happy to add, that Sir Edward O'Brien soon after arrived at home, and, by generous and great relief to the poor, much lessened their disposition to outrage of this kind! We hasten on our way. Believe me ever your's, &c. &c.

LETTER XIII.

Crusheen, Sept. 18, 1817.

MY DEAR L.

AFTER viewing Mr. Palmer's house and gardens, we took leave of the respectable family at

our inn, who, by their attentions, had made our pedestrian tour very agreeable to us in this part of the country. The weather was unpromising; but our time and the advanced season compelled us to proceed.

We very soon reached the beautiful lodge and entrance to Dromoland, the noble seat of Sir Edward O'Brien, a lineal descendant of the royal house of O'Brien. The lodge is one of the best taste and chastest execution we have seen, well-suiting the grandeur of Dromoland. From thence the avenue sweeps through extensive grounds and woods to the house. This venerable mansion stands on a gentle eminence, surrounded by noble trees, and overlooks a large and beautiful lake beneath the windows. The opposite hills rise gracefully above it, and form a lovely amphitheatre circling round, and blending with the groves and verdant meadows of Dromoland. From these hills are various views of the Shannon and country. The ancient appearance of the mansion-house, on which ivy had thrown here and there its leaves of glossy-green, was pleasing to us, as being far superior to that of many modern buildings. Sir Edward O'Brien received us with great politeness. The interior of the house is noble, and many good paintings very much gratified us. Those of Lord Clarendon, Queen Anne, Duchess of York, (wife of James the Second,) and of Lord Clarendon's two sons, are in

a small room adjoining the drawing-room. There was a connection in Queen Anne's time between Lord Clarendon's and the O'Brien family. The picture of the Duchess of York is a beautiful one. I believe there is a second of Queen Anne, but I do not exactly recollect. The pictures of the Queen and of Lord Clarendon are good. This little selection is valuable, and highly interesting. On the stair-case a fine figure, painted as large as life, of the royal hero Brian Borom, an ancestor of the respected owner of Dromoland, met our view. It is very respectably executed, and has great animation! The king sits on horseback, and seems directing an army. Dublin and Clontarfe appear in the distant ground. His countenance is animated by conscious rectitude, and the hope of liberating his country beams through it. Brian was called to the throne of Ireland, from that of Munster, at the age of seventy, and, at that of eighty-eight, fought the battle of Clontarfe against the Danes and those Irish who encouraged them; for history informs us, that these foreigners were instigated to rise against the monarch of Ireland by mal-content Irish.

After former historic studies, it was certainly a high gratification to see, at Dromoland, this picture. It is equally wrong to raise history to a fabulous and incredible point of fictitious glory, as to degrade it by unfair and dishonour-

able depreciation, or by ridicule of its brightest parts.

This King of Munster does not yield to an English Alfred in public or private virtues.—Their object was the same—to free their country from piratic and ferocious Danes. Success crowned Alfred; and men generally attribute all merit to it. The Irish king had but too many of his own subjects to contend with! many of them encouraged the Danes to resist the patriotic plans of improving the constitution and government of Ireland. His enlarged views did not suit the haughtiness of rival houses, and the licentiousness of degenerate and turbulent factions. Envy raised her snakey heads, in every corner, against this patriot king and hero; and he fell at Cloncarfe, happily for himself, in the bosom of glory, and spared the pangs of his old age being bowed down by a country's ingratitude, or an enemy's success.

The rival feuds of royal Irish houses, and the arrogance and renewed power of the Danes, which followed his decease, evince this clearly. It is not certain if this king was killed in his tent, or died at Kilmainham of his wounds. He refused the request of his son to abstain from the battle. He beautifully exemplified the saying, "Dulcè et decorum est pro patriâ mori."

Brian had contemplated forming a fleet to protect Ireland; but it is quite evident, from the

radical vices of the constitution of your government, and the strong footing the Danes had got, as well as from the vanity and insubordination of the Irish of those times, leading them to detest and embarrass a superior genius at home, that he must have failed in this, as in his other plans—worthy, indeed, of an Alfred! but incapable of succeeding through the causes I mention. But to the immortal hero himself may well be applied the great poet's eulogium, that—"His name and honour shall endure till time be no more!"

The loss at the battle of Clontarfe was nearly equal on each side—about four thousand. It is not to be omitted, that one of the petty despots, a King of Meath, took no part on the occasion; but looked on with his troops, and retired after the action.

In the gallery above the stair-case, where this picture of the patriot king was, we saw several very good ones, and a remarkable fine portrait of some character unknown, done by Vandyke. There was, also, a Spanish table of curious workmanship and large size; extremely handsome, and in the antique style of fashionable furniture of those times. It had been cast on the shore of Ireland when the Spanish armada had been dispersed. That event caused the shipwreck of many Spanish vessels on these coasts, with troops, treasures, and stores on board.

Here were, also, a pair of elk's horns, an animal long extinct in Ireland, and most parts of Europe.

Sir Edward O'Brien had the goodness to shew us these interesting pictures himself, adding highly to our gratification by the remarks of an enlightened mind, and by that generous politeness which eminently distinguishes, above most men, the true Irish gentleman.

From the drawing-room windows, the charming lake of Dromoland, on which the placid swans moved about, appears very beautiful. Though the day was unfavourable, nothing could hide (though the misty atmosphere somewhat diminished) the beauties of the scene.

Sir Edward and Lady O'Brien treated us with an hospitality peculiarly pleasing to pedestrians, who find the occasional charms of refined conversation and manners the best refreshment on their toilsome and devious way. Sir Edward directed us himself to the best path through his fine demesnes, and we left Dromoland, pleased with every scene, and gratified by every moment we had enjoyed there. Sir Edward O'Brien is a good agriculturist, without too much devoting himself to farming, and by his residence employs many. In the late famine, this family opened wide the stores of private bounty.

We hasten from this princely place on our way to Quin Abbey, a very few miles distant. Our

walk led us, by private roads, along the small river of Quin, to this ancient ruin. We were astonished at beholding it. Quin Abbey is one of the most perfect ruins in Ireland, and of wonderful beauty. Its tower, cloisters, and aisles, deserve great attention. There we saw an incredible quantity of bones and sculls, long blanched by time's resistless hand—they were piled in great quantities in the abbey. What awful records, my dear L., of the past! How many busy and thinking beings were these whitened fragments of mortality once! Some devoted to war, some to religion, some to commerce, or agriculture!—all now silent, and alike insensible to the howling blast and cold rains, or snows of winter, as to the sweet charms of a spring, or summer-day! The day proved wet; and as we strayed through the venerable and finely gothic aisles and cloisters of this abbey, we felt these melancholy truths, for we pedestrians were but humbly journeying on to close our short career, and be no more known! There is a church as well as monastery at Quin. There seems, and have been there, two parts of religious establishment at most of the ruins we meet. I apprehend that education and devout retirement occupied one, and the exercises of religious worship the other. From the introduction of Christianity, Ireland indubitably became distinguished for learning and piety in less than a century. These mag-

nificent remains remind us of it. I am not, as I have often told you, an antiquarian; and, indeed, we have scarcely time to spare from studying the present living hour, for all the minute and distant points of antiquity. Some ruins we behold may have flourished before,—others after the coming of the English. That which I incline to call the monastic era in Ireland, commencing at the period I state, was certainly favourable to every thing noble and glorious in the human mind.

As late as the time of Henry the Second, we perceive the Irish clergy struggling for the liberty of the subject against the petty despots of the island. And at the monastic era, it is clear they were, as far as circumstances permitted them, the guardians of learning, freedom, and law! The Roman power had fallen, and a dark and double despotism was rising over continental Europe, in its emancipated kingdoms. Their kings and their clergy were favourable to the ignorance and superstition which gave despotic power to each; but, in Ireland, Christianity breathed a far more benign influence! It very much softened and restrained the arbitrary power of its numerous little despotisms, and being unpolluted by the manners and vices of the Continent, had a more powerful and better effect, on a smaller space, than elsewhere could be found.

The Anglo-Saxon nobles and princes, and even

those from other parts, came to Ireland in those times for instruction, or retirement; and were hospitably and nobly received! Ireland then sent learned and pious men, as missionaries, to enlighten other parts of Europe; and the gleam of liberty and religion, which burst from her verdant island, is a high proof of the intellect and love of learning which, to this hour, distinguishes her inhabitants. Petty despots respected religion in Ireland, when nothing else over-awed them. And the monastic era, which endured till the coming of the Danes in the beginning of the eighth century, gave Ireland more repose and spread more civilization than the thousand preceding years. Then, truly, Christianity shone with unclouded lustre in one favoured spot; and the learned and pious men, who, devoid of all political and selfish purposes, administered the rights of its worship; cultivated, and communicated the light of ancient and modern learning, and raised a barrier between an enslaved people and haughty princes,—are entitled to lasting veneration!

The Abbey of Quin well merits every traveller's observation. We could not leave it without a mournful sigh. We recollected Glendaloch. That, too, an asylum for learning; we could not but grieve, that the human mind in Ireland, through a thousand conflicting and unfortunate circumstances, had fallen into neglect, and that

the lustre of its powers had been dimmed by unwise oppression, and the fatal endurance of a system, withering its buds and blossoms for so many centuries!

Let me not be thought to repeat such a reflection too often. Surely, if governments suppress learning and genius, they have no ground to censure the ignorance and barbarity which afterwards produce insubordination and violences!

The Danes disturbed the monastic era in Ireland by the most ferocious outrages. They directed their ravages against every learned and religious house, and were animated by a truly barbaric spirit. Glendaloch, that romantic, and almost sublime seat of the muses, and of piety, to which I introduced you in our first walk, fell a sacrifice to their brutal fury. Conquerors of a rude description war against the mind, its productions, and its classic retreats, with instinctive fury.

In modern days, the late ruler of France, it is said, had begun to cause the finest works of the ancient poets and historians to be maimed, and deprived of their noblest and most exalted passages. Such were some of *his* improvements!

I cannot acquit, as much as I desire, the English from depressing and destroying the ancient learning of Ireland! We find very early statutes against her language—one of the most venerable and noble in the world; and the disppearance of

her poetry, her harps, her music, her religious and classic seminaries, speaks woefully, though not altogether against them in this point!

The Danes had done much, in three hundred years previous possession of great part of the island, and I much suspect that the petty despots themselves were poor encouragers of literature and genius. All combined, and acted in various ways to extinguish them; and the beautiful ruins we have just quitted are one among many silent testimonies of what Ireland was, and what she has suffered. I allude to her monastic era. Since its extinction, the lamp of science and poetry has but glimmered through the storm.

Elizabeth herself, a scholar of no ordinary merit, and perhaps, (if she had not been destined to be the slave of party, and a queen,) a star of brilliant light in higher regions than those of politics, used war and religious persecution against Ireland and her sanctuaries.

The Stuarts, who affected to patronize learning and the arts, but sought arbitrary power, by corrupt or cruel means, abandoned this land to adventurers, who were no great favourers of Irish learning or talent. Cromwell tried extermination and exile. William and Anne proscribed by statute. What result have we? An immense unimproved and unhappy population, mouldering ruins, and a silent country, where the harp slumbers, poetry but murmurs a little,

and the vigorous pen of genius lies unused in the shade!

When you visit the Abbey of Quin you will not be surprized at these thoughts. It is really very grand, and its aisles reminded us of Westminster Abbey. A new church is building near it, however, which will somewhat injure the lonely and grand picturesque of this most venerable scene. The village near the Abbey is wretched; the cabins very poor.

Leaving the Abbey of Quin, we proceeded along a wild road, and, as the day improved, saw many distant mountains. There is great poverty in Clare, and the miserable attempt to sell unlicensed spirits in their mud-cottages scarcely excites displeasure; in a country where there is no trade, where agriculture is overwhelmed, and the people too numerous, nature struggles to procure some livelihood, and labour and fatigue seeks some humble refreshment.

In our walks we repeatedly experience the inconvenience springing from the great poverty of a country which affords no ale for travellers;—is not permitted to sell or use the humble home-made whiskey;—and has no orchards to produce cyder!

In the evening we stopped at a village called Spancer Hill. There the houses are poor, but a few neatly thatched ones are respectable. We smiled to exchange the splendid scene of Dro-

moland, in a few hours, for the very humble reception and fare of Spancer Hill. But the pedestrian is cheered by variety. He delays not long on his path, and, from the meanest views of human nature, enriches his stores.

Spancer Hill is encompassed by singular round hills, but the country wants wood, and the land is too dear to permit improvement. They commonly give six guineas per acre for their potatoe-ground. On leaving this village, the evening-sun broke out in full splendour, lighted every hill and small lake in this picturesque country, and, penetrating the humble cottage, beamed on the scanty furniture within. The Clare people are civil and friendly, and give every information or direction they could. The high rents afflict them in a considerable manner, and in their conversation we perceived a kind of despair, mingled with the hope that landlords and great farmers must yield the vain pretension of holding them up at war-rates. How happy for Ireland, my dear L., if all had brought them down promptly, and with a good grace, when the markets fell. What pains might have been saved!—What riots avoided!—What idle precautions been made unnecessary! I greatly incline to think agricultural produce must yet be left to find its own level. Perhaps (as they have it, by some old custom in Guernsey,) landlords, by taking the rents in corn, will, in the end, find the

just price of their lands. Many landlords have thought it a good expedient to take cattle, or any commodity tenants may have, in lieu of rent they cannot get. This must strip every farm of stock, and ruin the tenant for the ensuing year.

On our way the robin sung his evening lay in the hedge, and the narrow rural road we followed became very pleasing. We passed Moriarty, a handsome wooded place of Major Macnamara's, and had a distant view of Ennis. As the evening fast closed upon us we reached an irregular but beautiful lake, on a distant bank of which stood a small ruined castle. The rural toils of the day were ending, and the cottagers everywhere bringing home cattle, or plying little household cares at their doors. Loughgullion spread its whispering waters along the road at our feet, and the coot murmured among the reeds. As we grew fatigued we saw, with pleasure, the small village of Crusheen, situated in Inchieronan Lake. We were now entering Connaught (according to its last division), and began to perceive one of its peculiarities and great beauties—the picturesque and frequent lake scattered through it. We had seen several this day. We found an old ruined house converted into a tolerable inn, at Crusheen, and met great civility, an humble supper, and very clean good beds. The manners of the people have become very mild. We meet kindness and great readi-

ness to oblige in all parts. We ask ourselves, is this Connaught, represented to us as wild and impassable? But we shall know more presently. I now bid you adieu, &c. &c.

LETTER XIV.

Galway, Sept. 14, 1817.

MY DEAR L.

YESTERDAY we had a walk of sixteen or seventeen miles. We left Crusheen before the sun arose. Their humble inmates were leaving the cottages to prepare for daily toil. The robin again poured a soft melodious strain. The country is romantic and hilly; but the want of trees, and the poorness of the cultivation, make it melancholy. The cottages are quite miserable. As we passed one the door was open, and the groans of the sick, and, I fear, dying, reached our ears. Our road carried us to the borders of a pretty small lake, when the glorious sun suddenly lighted up the whole scene. Never was any thing more delightful. The lake caught his rays, and actually looked glowing with fire. At every farm the fowls and birds rejoiced. The sprightly cock announced the coming day, and the little wren, in a hedge near us, poured his

clear loud song. The smoke rose from the cottages, and, as the hens cackled on the opposite side of the lake, we heard them distinctly. The small corn-fields, and the little meadows of the poor people, brightened in the rays of a morning we shall not readily forget. The air was pure and serene, and seemed to give its first freshness to the mind itself. Oh! how surpassing all things are these early beauties of nature! How benignant is that hand which spreads them before us, if we but come forth and taste them! Yet, my dear L., to our enjoyment of this lovely morning scene was wanting, the consciousness of the happiness of our fellow-creatures round us. Their poor dwellings, pale countenances, and ill-stocked farms, told us a plain, but distressing tale! Continuing our walk we reached a little vale of great beauty. A busy rookery, in a wood at its entrance, saluted us with a clamour far from unpleasing. A stream flowed through this vale past a pretty country-seat and its improvements, and served to turn an old mill, round which were clustered some rural cottages. How beautiful were Ireland, if well wooded! How heavily has the hand of the spoiler fallen, when it is so destitute of it as we have now seen in Leinster, Munster, and Connaught! From several persons, this morning, we heard the uniform complaint of high rents.

Near this pretty vale we re-entered the county

of Galway, and Connaught, according to Elizabeth's division. The morning continued so fine, the whole country looked well, and soon assumed a better appearance than near Crusheen. Good farms, and respectable cultivation, were to be seen on every side, and quantities of very good Irish sheep, for which Galway is remarkable. Marks of a good distribution of property began to strike our eyes, and we walked on, pleased with our first onset, into Connaught. We soon saw distant woods, and a noble landscape, adorned by mountains for about two miles, and reaching Lord Gort's gate, passed into his fine demesne. In a short time we arrived at the princely castle now building by his lordship, and were delighted on entering this province to find our first essay so well rewarded.

Gort-castle is not more than one-third finished, but is proceeding rapidly. It is of cut stone, and hangs over the edge of Lough Coutra, a noble sheet of water, six or seven miles long, and broad in proportion, and adorned by wooded islands. The castle is in the Gothic style, and already makes a grand and beautiful appearance. A terrace is partly finished, which, through the fine trees at the lake-side, looks on its expanse. None of them on any side have been removed more than to admit the building to go properly on, so that when it is completed, this new and really magnificent building will stand encom-

passed by venerable trees. We thought this shewed judgment, and much taste. There were nearly an hundred workmen employed, masons, labourers, carpenters, overseers, &c. &c. This does great good at this moment, and reflects great honour on the noble proprietor. "He is, (said an honest fellow, an Irish labourer), a friend "to his country. He spends his money at home." A high and deserved eulogium on Lord Gort! When we considered, also, that this noble character, when Colonel Vorcher, at the head of his regiment of brave Irish militia, checked the French, and frustrated their views, in coming from Killala, we felt disposed to add still higher tribute of applause to his lordship's name. In this castle he may serenely pass the evening of his days, and look round on the country he contributed to preserve! Long hence, when he is borne to his tomb, a grateful people will bless him, and on it may be inscribed the titles of— "their protector, and the empire's defender."

The view from this noble castle is enchanting. Lough Coutra is surrounded by a fine country, and a great sweep of distant mountain-scenery rising behind, makes the picture of remarkable beauty. We felt some regret that the noble proprietor's absence deprived us of the power of offering him the respects due to his exalted character, and requesting permission from himself to see his castle.

We reached the town of Gort to breakfast. It is approached by a fine avenue of trees,—always to us a welcome sight. It is a neat modern town, containing nothing remarkable. As we were anxious to make a long walk this day, we hurried on, disappointing the curious gaze of several in this country-town, who, as is too customary in Ireland, having little business to occupy them, are devoured with curiosity to know that of others. Pedestrians of a genteel appearance very much puzzle these characters; and as there are no servants to question,—no equipages to examine,—and no postillions to listen to,—these persons are left in suspense.

Thus we left our friends in Gort, and passing some well-wooded places of Mr. Gregory and Mr. O'Hara, reached a long dreary expanse, which I called—"the plains of desolation." Large fields,—if fields they could be called,—covered with continued ledges of rock, spread round us on every side, and before us the solitary ruined castle of Drimisne stood in the midst of this extraordinary and dismal scene. You will not marvel much, my dear L., if all we had read and heard of the Irish being driven, by Cromwell's commissioners, and other less barbarous English governors, to this province, rushed into the mind. "What!" said we, "were this unhappy people exiled to such plains as these? Were they to exchange the fertile fields of Lein-

ster and Munster for these rocks?" Thus will the fancy mislead and exaggerate, till history or observation and experience correct. Certainly, the very long walk we had through this dreary expanse, was calculated to make us feel ourselves exiled, and not likely to regain any civilized haunts of men.

We got some miserably bad beer at a cottage where they spoke nothing but Irish; and already we find, in the west of Ireland, the ale and beer very indifferent. Often shall we regret, I fear, the ale of Wexford and the barony of Forth. We saw a considerable number of sheep among these stony plains, which contrived to pick up a tolerable share of food. At their termination, we found two small kind of hamlets, with good houses, and the country assuming a pleasing and well-cultivated appearance. Oats, wheat, barley, and potatoes, were the crops; and the farms looked well divided and enclosed. There was not much flax. The sheep are of a good breed, large, and clean-looking. They are Irish, but suit the soil and climate. Having walked four or five-and-twenty miles, we felt much fatigued.

As the village of Oran appeared in view, which is a few miles from Galway, we thought it a very grateful sight. The sea washes the fields near it, and we hailed the first sight of the Atlantic with sensible pleasure. We before had some glimpses of it on descending from the "plains of

desolation" to this fertile and happy-looking country. At Oran we enjoyed a cheerful view of a great scope of it, very near us. We felt so much refreshed by the wholesome breeze that we inhaled from it, that we resolved to continue our way to the ancient city of Galway, rather than remain at this village.

We proceeded, as the sublimity of the Atlantic, and the pleasantness and beauty of the country near Galway, beguiled us of our fatigue. The toils and anxieties of the pedestrian are many. Far from beloved friends, who may participate in them mentally, but cannot lessen them, he has not the ease and bustle of modern travelling to entertain him. He cannot loll at his leisure, and view the humble peasantry, the rural farm, or homely village, with the languid smile of indifference; or, with half-closed eyes, dream of splendid scenes of pleasure or ambition, so dear to the heart of man. He must, on the contrary, at his journey's end, feel as the bulk of his fellow-men are so often forced to do; his feet may be blistered, and his very soul be weary. But the lesson is valuable,—the experience is good,—and, ah! my dear L., the repose he enjoys is sweeter than the palace, with all its luxurious incitements to slumber, can ever bestow!

We anxiously desired to see Galway, that metropolis of Connaught, where General Ginkle bent his way before sitting down before Lime-

rick, and which for so many centuries was a seat of Irish power, long after the English arrived, unvisited and unsubdued by them. We reached it late in the evening, having walked about thirty miles, and were most happy to find a small inn, and much wished-for refreshment and rest.

Believe me, yours, &c.

LETTER XV.

Galway, Sept. 16, 1817.

MY DEAR L.

We have surveyed this old city, and, though pleased with its situation, have been disappointed with its appearance. We had figured to ourselves an ancient town, placed on the grandest part of the shores of the Atlantic, and making a dignified figure on entering it; but the town produces no effect of this sort. It is very old, composed of narrow streets, in general indifferent, but very curiously ornamented in some parts by antique carved stone door-cases and windows. There is a fine castellet in the centre of one street, of a striking and handsome appearance. The number of inhabitants is very considerable, from 20,000 to 25,000 at least, and, I believe, almost entirely Catholics. The population of the neigh-

bouring country is so. A handsome and very large chapel is building here, and there are several smaller ones. The numbers attending them at divine worship are very great indeed.

The church is an ancient and very interesting old building, in the best Gothic style; but I confess it appeared to me, on attending service there, not improved by the black and white colouring put on the old pillars. The Protestant congregation is small.

The market in Galway is very plentiful and good, and affords an excellent opportunity of hearing the country-people, who are well dressed, speak Irish, which gives one a strong idea of the Welsh. They were extremely well-behaved; we perceived no intoxication, or riots, and heard little noise. Already is great mildness apparent in these parts, and sweetness of disposition. Butter, fish, eggs, potatoes, mutton, and beef, were in great plenty in the market, and very good. There was much turf in it; also, coarse linen, yarn, and webs, and woollen-cloths. The mixture on market-day of cattle, country-people, soldiery, &c. &c. produced a lively effect.

The dress of the women, who are handsome, and have very good expression in their countenances, is peculiar. Scarlet, crimson, and purple, are their favourite colours. In short, though Galway is a considerable town, it is in no manner a pleasing sight, from its bad construction and

want of cleanliness; yet, on Sundays, or the market-days, one cannot see it without great pleasure, and a good deal of surprize.

On Sundays, the better classes strike the eye, as I have said they did in the great cities of the south of Ireland, as a race of people, handsome in their persons, and elegant in their dress. On the market-days, one sees the country-people as I have described.

Already do all our prejudices as to Connaught daily wear away. If the old Irish had been so degenerate and barbarous, we ought here to have encountered many traces of it. We see none. It is rather surprizing, how, under so many disadvantages, and so remote from Leinster, the early seat of English improvement, that we find no inferiority to the people of Wexford, and also pleasing and civilized manners. But Galway, I imagine, long held intercourse with Spain, and possessed respectability and civilization before the English name was heard of in Ireland. There is an air of foreign antiquity, if I may say so, in Galway, which gives pleasing ideas of the past, and impresses the opinion of Spanish merchants, or Irish gentlemen connected with Spain, residing in it, in an hospitable and elegant manner.

There is, however, much wretchedness in the cabins, and other miserable houses of the poor, in Galway. They are fearful receptacles for fever,

which is, alas! spreading here. I cannot help repeating, that every large town we see in the southern and western parts, shews a vast population, crowded unpleasantly together. Every where in these towns is there want of sufficient employment; little trade,—little manufacture,—and little happiness. How much for the legislature! how much for a prince! how much for the statesman to attend to, who ought to consider of what inflammable materials the population of great cities in Ireland are likely to be formed! I am far from being able to digest and utter a proper opinion on this matter; but I fear that the Union, unless greatly modified or improved, is incompatible with Ireland's success in commerce and manufacture; and, without that, I cannot see how her great cities can flourish. If England aims at making her solely agricultural, how can her surplus hands have occupation?—If she wishes her to be less turbulent, how can she be expected to be so without full employment? Certainly, near twenty years operation of that Union has given increase of power, but none of wealth, trade, or prosperity. They may be in reserve, but I can perceive no appearance of them, so as to increase revenue, and relieve England. Yet, without such prosperity as can alone arise from commerce and manufacture joined to agriculture, Ireland must, in my opinion, be both burthensome and dangerous to the sister-

country. I should wish to observe a bold original policy pursued, such as we have not yet had. I do not scruple to say, that I think, if the talents and enlarged and humane mind of the present secretary could freely be allowed their unbiassed scope, and that he resolved to give the charter of Henry the Third its full and just efficacy, he could, in a few years, render this island a flourishing, contented, and all-powerful auxiliary to the British nation. One cannot walk through Ireland so much as we have done, without bearing testimony to the vigour and beneficence of his mind. Few, perhaps, in the very prime and morning of life have devoted more cares to the happiness of a people than Mr. Peel has done.

The situation of Galway between Lough Corrib, a noble lake thirty miles long, and an arm of Galway-bay, is a very peculiar one. The prodigious gush of fresh water flowing from the narrowed neck of the lake, is surprizingly great. They get a great deal of salmon and other fish here; but the fisheries are involved in disputes and contests, and do not succeed well in consequence.

The corporation-system exists in considerable strength in Galway. An independent party has, notwithstanding, been able to return Mr. Blake, of Menlock, as representative for Galway. Borough-elections, however, are by no means serviceable

to Ireland, under the present state of things. They introduce great depravity and corruption, and dreadful animosities. The plan of forty-shilling freeholders in counties, also opens the door to great disorder, and often to great oppression to poor tenantry. If none but ten-pound freeholders voted at county elections, and small boroughs were merged into counties, the election-system in Ireland would be improved.

The pier and harbour of Galway extend some distance from it, and are very good. We saw some ships, particularly American ones, there, of great burthen; but the trade of this place has greatly decreased of late times, and is now little. Between two and three hundred years ago, the intercourse with Spain is said to have been very considerable, and many fortunes in this country have been made by commerce. None could have been more honourably acquired.

Galway, Sept. 17, 1818.

This morning we took a pleasant excursion along the shore of Galway-bay. It is six or seven miles across, and extends a great way to right and left. It is bounded to the left by a noble range of mountains in Clare. The shore on the Galway side is delightfully varied and winding. We reached a headland, or green promontory, of great beauty, commanding a view of the bay, of the Isles of Arran, and of the wide-

spreading Atlantic. The sides of this promontory are steep, and have a chalky appearance, whence, I believe, it is called "White Cliff." In the interior of the country below us, a handsomely-wooded place improved the scene. The day proved fine, and numerous fishing-boats, some at anchor, some in full sail, seemed at our feet.

As we returned, the Clare mountains were beautifully illuminated by the sun's rays, and columns of smoke ascended from their base, from heaps of wreck, burning for kelp. The blue expanse of the bay was calmly reposing, as light white clouds hung over it. Along the shore, as we returned to Galway, different row-boats swept rapidly along, manned by active and cheerful young men neatly dressed, and mingling the song and joke with the well-timed strokes of their oars.

The national music of Ireland, orally delivered, and traditionally preserved, enlivens in a wonderful manner the pedestrian's way through it. It was not the season to hear the first hymn of the year, "an samrah an teacht," or, "the summer is coming," which is a very beautiful old air, and of the most remote antiquity. But the songs we have heard this autumn in the south and west of Ireland, have been full of pathos and originality. Their national airs in India mark the seasons, as we find they do in Ireland.

Galway appeared, in this walk, to great ad-

vantage, and crowned the scene. We heard no language but Irish; and as our eyes met, the bright red colours of the women's and children's dress (a crimson or coquelicot), we had, for a moment, the idea of a foreign city.

Entering the town, the shipping, and a fragment of the old walls remaining, looked exceedingly well, whilst the vast body of water from Lough Corrib, now gushing and sparkling in the sun, and even contending successfully against the tide, had a beautiful effect. Some fishermen stood in parts of this torrent, on rocks, and casting their long lines, animated these waters.

Galway itself, with its antique gateways, and arched passages, had, at the end of this delightful walk, a picturesque and ancient appearance, harmonizing with the whole scenery.

Galway, Sept. 18, 1818.

This day we gave to visiting Menlock, the seat of Sir John Blake, father to the member for Galway. It is an ancient castelleted mansion, very beautifully placed on the edge of the Corrib river, which empties itself into Galway-bay. It is about a mile and a half distant from Galway. Sir John Blake received us with politeness and hospitality.

From Menlock, the opening view of Lough Corrib is very fine; the distant mountains, spreading far around, gave that exquisite charm to,

and finishing of the scenery, so often to be found in the landscapes of Ireland, that one ceases to wonder at this ever-delighting accompaniment of the picture.

When we had crossed the river at Menlock, the sun had brightened. The meadows on the river-side grew more verdant, and the clear river flowing through them past Menlock, smiled in his rays. Some boats glided past, and in so charming a scene, every care and anxiety was forgotten. We think of leaving this to-morrow.

By a painful mistake, our letters have been delayed, or have taken another and erroneous course. Our suspense has been distressing for two days; but we hope to meet them in Mayo.

Galway has been of considerable consequence on some occasions. After the fall of Limerick, it was besieged by the parliament-forces, and, notwithstanding the efforts of Lord Clanrickarde, surrendered shortly to them. Lord C. left the kingdom soon after.

After the memorable battle of Anghrim, Ginkle scarcely waited to refresh his troops before he marched here, and summoned the town. A French force, commanded by General d'Ussone, was in Galway, and, in conjunction with the Irish, returned a defiance. A detachment of Ginkle's, however, having seized a fort commanding part of the walls, and the sense of the inhabitants being for a surrender, a parley was beat,

and Ginkle, with that prudence and moderation which marked all his actions, granted most liberal and honourable terms to Galway.

A curious anecdote is told of Lord Forbes, a fanatic agent of the parliament of England, coming here from the south of Ireland in the times of Charles, to tamper with the inhabitants for the surrender of Galway to parliament and the state of England. The offer was rejected with disdain, and Lord Forbes returned, having failed in his mission. It had been well, had Galway possessed similar firmness on another occasion.

When Rinuncini, the nuncio, was compelled to leave Kilkenny, he fled here. The Catholics, and kingdom at large, were sensible of his pernicious conduct, and desired him to leave the island. Galway, through the credulity and honest simplicity of its people, still looked up to the nuncio, and obeyed his furious dictates. Happily, his power drew to a close; and, having vainly endeavoured to keep alive civil war, and linger some time at Galway, he withdrew. Rinuncini, fond of power and intrigue to the last, continued to hold a correspondence with Ireland from France and Italy, till the returning good sense of the Irish ended that intercourse, which should never have commenced. Yet, my dear L., if the times be duly considered, and the impolitic attacks on the Catholic religion and its ministers, in that and preceding periods, be adverted to, one cannot

much wonder that a people of so much sensibility as the Irish should adhere, for a time, even to the follies and improprieties of a foreign prelate, who taught them to expect from his hands, safety for themselves, and security for religion! I was omitting to say, that the jail and court-house at Galway are very good public buildings.

As pedestrians, quite unknown, we cannot speak of the society in Galway, but believe it to be genteel and agreeable. From some gentlemen, however, we received marks of politeness and kindness which we can never forget.

If to-morrow prove favourable, we shall not wait for these hoped-for letters, but proceed towards Mayo. As far as we have now seen of Connaught, we have reason to be greatly pleased with it. The people are mild, and, in the country parts, extremely kind to strangers. Agriculture is improving, and we have not heard of riot or turbulence. The population is exceedingly great, and nearly entirely Catholic. Such of their clergy as we have accidentally seen, are very gentleman-like, and well informed.

We shall start to-morrow, recovered from our fatigues, gratified with our progress, and pleased with people whom we have seen for the first time. We have now walked above one hundred and eighty miles, and have a still greater exertion to make. I shall write to you very soon again,

as we expect to see some things very interesting at Cong, at the head of Lough Corrib.

Believe me truly yours.

LETTER XVI.

Cong, Sept. 21, 1817.

MY DEAR L.

We hesitated previous to leaving Galway (which we have done two days ago), whether we should bend our way into Connamara, a celebrated and wild part of this county; we also thought of seeing the Isles of Arran, which are very curious, and where they catch the puffin for its feathers, in the same manner as you read they do in Norway, by letting a man down the rocks to remain there, and to seize them when asleep; but the season being too far advanced to venture much delay, we preferred proceeding for Mayo.

We left Galway on a very fine day, and the busy harvest-labour made the country, as we passed on, quite delightful. The county of Galway has more tillage than we expected to see, and exhibits wonderful industry in the inhabitants. The dress of the women is different from any thing we have met in Ireland as to make and colour. The latter I spoke of lately, and the former con-

sists of a jacket with long sleeves over a boddice, or gown and petticoat all of the same bright colour.

There was a good deal of wheat cutting as we walked along, and very great industry manifested by the people in every department of agriculture. These rural scenes were rendered more grateful by the very obliging manners of the inhabitants. We were sorry not to see more flax.

Between three and four miles on our way we reached the hamlet of Clare Galway, distinguished by a ruined castle and monastery. A handsome little river runs past them both. A neat cottage, adjoining the latter building, attracted our attention as well as the monastery. It had belonged to the Rev. Mr. Blake, a Catholic ecclesiastic of learning, benevolence, and taste. The good man was no more; but his cottage and gardens, though now neglected, evinced that a superior mind had dwelt there. A little raised spot, (planted with evergreens and other shrubs) made for pious meditation, and marked by an engraved stone, praying for the remembrance and prayers of survivors for himself, was near the cottage. The river murmured pleasingly near the garden in front. The ruined monastery immediately behind this sweet, but now melancholy cottage, is a very fine and venerable old building. Here we saw a great quantity of sculls and bones, as at Quin. The housekeeper of the late venerable resident gave

us a hospitable reception. Milk, butter, potatoes of the best kind, with household bread and eggs, were our fare, served up in the parlour of the late worthy owner. His housekeeper shewed that she felt deep and lasting sorrow! The good ecclesiastic had a small chapel formed out of part of the old abbey, roofed in, and adorned with simple, but not inelegant taste. We learned with concern, that in the unhappy times of 1798, it had been ruined and defaced by some English militia, though Mr. Blake had given all his provisions to the soldiery. "I may live to repair it, and I pardon them," was all his remark; and he had the satisfaction to leave his humble chapel in better order than it was previous to this outrage, before he died. The housekeeper told us the fact without ceremony, but with a sort of surprize, mingled with calm forgiveness, at a transaction which must have dreadfully shocked her feelings when it happened. Doubtless it made a powerful sensation amongst Mr. Blake's flock, and nothing could have been more unwise, or improper.

What Elizabeth could not effect with all the power of government, the ill-timed violence of English militia could never expect to accomplish in the small sphere of Clare Galway! The river which runs in front of this lovely cottage is said to disappear a few miles from Clare Galway, and to rise again and pursue its course to Lough

Corrib. We gathered a few flowers from the garden of the cottage, and, thanking our good hostess, continued our way.

The general appearance of Galway indicates respectable agriculture, though a want of green crops is, as usual in Ireland, too visible. There is also great deficiency of trees in this country, and even of hedges.

We passed through the small village of Cahir Morris, on this road, and as the sun was setting, approached the village of Headfort. The prospect improved as we advanced, and verdant sloping grounds and surrounding woods appeared pleasing to the eye, after a walk of sixteen miles through a very bare country. The far-spreading mountains, glowing in the softened rays of the sun, improved the picture! The environs of Headfort gave unequivocal symptoms of a resident landlord, who united elegance with ability in his improvements! The cottages of Headfort are comfortable and decent; some of them quite tasteful! A flagged foot-way on one side the street of this small town conducts to the inn. It is a good measure to shew the Irish practicable means of cleanliness.

At Headfort we found a large and pretty comfortable inn. As the following day proved to be the market one, we saw the place to much advantage, enlivened by the rustic crowd, and exhibiting the bustle of internal trade and manufac-

ture, greatly protected and encouraged by the proprietor, Mr. St. George. He has established a mart for the sale of flannels, and gives premiums for the best pieces, and largest quantity sold. We saw a good deal of it, and abundance of the usual country commodities, in the market. The people were well dressed, quiet, and happy; and, though Mr. St. George has not been more than five years in possession of his estates, Headfort presents, on the market-day, a scene of improvement most gratifying to behold. This gentleman is a vigilant and just magistrate. It is to be admitted, that many cases of unruliness and ill-behaviour have required his decisive interference. There is every prospect, that the residence of such a character will civilize the neighbourhood in a few years, more than any insurrection-bill could in twenty or thirty.

In Elizabeth's time men only thought of gaining and improving land, in Ireland;—it is the better way to include the people!! But government requires many such magistrates as Mr. St. George, or Lord Donneraile, throughout Ireland, —well calculated, enlightened, and impartial,— before it can hope to tranquillize it thoroughly, and lessen its own expences. This desideratum, in addition to a more liberal system of their own, rendering such magistrates less exposed to the passions of a great population, will soon produce much good! Both are requisite for public good;

and the minister, who has not courage, or power, to endeavour to produce them, can only hope to leave Ireland,——much as he found it!

We had the pleasure of dining with Mr. St. George, and his charming family. He shewed us his demesne, which he is forming out of a neglected spot, and will soon make a beautiful and picturesque scene. He gave us every information we could desire, and which we could expect from his gifted and highly-cultivated mind.

Near Headfort we visited the Abbey of Ross, another ancient, religious building, situated near a small river and marshy ground. It is very large and venerable, and (what is very singular,) part of the roof remains still entire, though not of stone-work.

We paid a visit to an old Catholic ecclesiastic in Headfort, to make enquiries relative to this abbey. He spoke with fervent gratitude of Mr. St. George, who, without solicitation, had made him decently independent. His sincere and grateful sentiments proved an exalted mind; for, in too many in this country, and in others, pride extinguishes gratitude! Vulgar minds, of all ranks, even those on thrones, hate to acknowledge the inferiority of an obligation; and, instead of the honesty of a repayment of good deeds, destroy, or desert, or calumniate their benefactors. Not so, this venerable man!—The

Rev. Mr. Ferral we found to be, though under an humble thatched-roof, a finished classical scholar, and an instructive companion, attached to government on principle, and equally averse to insubordination. By persecuting such men in former times, instead of acting as the liberal and sensible landlord here, what has not the English government lost of influence and security, for centuries?

Mr. Ferral remarked to us, in regard to monasteries or abbeys, a curious fact:—that in France they were all placed on high ground; in Ireland on low, and near water. He thought the Irish more judicious, and mentioned to us, with a smile, the three curses of the Irish—"a high place for a house, a beautiful wife, and white cows;" perhaps, from exciting attention, and raising envy, he meant they were dangerous—and, consequently, objectionable! Mr. F. stated to us, from knowledge and experience of between thirty and forty years standing, that great improvement had taken place in this part of Ireland. This comprehends the chief portion of his majesty's reign, and manifests, what the benignant conciliation of this most revered monarch has done; whole centuries of coercion had but kept the island in a ferocious and noxious situation! He farther said, that all the cabins were surprisingly better, having formerly no gables, or chimnies, and scarcely

resembling the abodes of human beings; that the people were vastly more civilized; that no disaffection existed among them; that there were cases of turbulence and immorality, but partial; and, that a sentiment of gratitude and reverence to his majesty had taken place of foolish dislike of England, in the minds of the lower classes!—He conversed of France, (with a great deal of ease and understanding,) which he had known in the times of Louis the Fifteenth and Sixteenth, and spoke of her sanguinary revolution with great horror!

Entering into the true spirit of our pedestrian tour, this good old man was highly pleased with it. "In no other manner," said he, "can you know the actual state of Ireland. Few take the trouble to look into her wretchedness; and many exalted and good characters are quite ignorant of it. Make it known, and you may serve the unhappy. But, if you publish any thing, write for no party; but do justice to all. Avoid undue warmth, or any misrepresentation, as much as possible; but fear not to write *truth!* that will ever stand the test; must do good; and, when we are all no more, will live!"

Accompanying us a little way on the road, he gave us his benediction, and we departed. This excellent man asked not, and knew not, of what sect of religion we were. His was the effusion of

a good and enlightened mind! We shall see him no more; but his last words are too valuable to be forgotten!

We were very glad to observe, in the cabins skirting Headfort, many of the women employed in making lace. In Ireland the women want employment very much, unless where the linen-manufacture exists. It is true, that they often assist in the labours of the field in small farms; but it is painful to see them exposed to weather and such hardship. The more the smaller domestic manufactories are spread among them—such as knitting, spinning, making lace, &c. &c. the more the condition of the poor will improve. We have seen too much idleness, and want of cleanliness in cottages in Ireland, not to regret the want of some stimulus in them to better things. The females of the lower class, by neglecting their houses and children, and their own persons, make the men less pleased with, and, consequently, less attached to home. Hence, too often is the public-house—the fertile source of an Irishman's temporary joy and lasting sorrow—resorted to!

When at Navan, in Meath, three years ago, I mentioned family-pride as another cause of slothful neglect of themselves and cottages among the Irish. You will not suppose we find that foible less luxuriant in growth, in Munster or Connaught, than in Leinster! In every part

of Ireland it conduces to the disregard of domestic neatness and independence, as far as we can judge in our walks. It is allied to something of a misplaced, but not unnatural national sentiment of antiquity, and has been perpetuated by the oppression the Irish have been made too long to endure. Nor is this pride confined to the lower orders; it pervades a second class, of more means and better manners, but who are also injured by it in another way. It causes them to despise agriculture and trade too much, and aim at an establishment and appearance hurtful to themselves and families.—

> "In pride—in reasoning pride our error lies,—
> All quit their sphere, and rush into the skies."

Even those who have made a handsome competency in trade, too soon relinquish their business and burn to become country 'squires.

We do not see as much as one could desire in Ireland; the noble simplicity, and manly indifference, as to external grandeur and pomp which so much distinguishes, and really exalts the farmer, manufacturer, merchant, and gentleman of small fortune in England. A great deal of this pride, however, may be attributed to the fallen fortunes, and to the ill-usage of the Irish. Misfortune often increases pride.

Our road to Cong was in some degree mountainous and wild. We had peeps at Lough

Corrib, which were striking. Harvest was concluding, and the people busily employed at their turf and flax. The farming is wonderfully good where these industrious people can get a spot of land, and a little independence.

Near Cong we saw, with great pleasure, considerable appearance of the linen-manufactory, and heard the hum of the spinning-wheel, and flutter of the reel, in many cottages as we passed. The road, also, grew winding, romantic, and strikingly beautiful! Towering mountains before us, which glowed beneath the red and lucid sky, raised their summits to the clouds; and Lough Corrib, full of islands, half obscured by mist, spread its waters to the left. The number of asses used by the peasantry, for carrying burthens in little panniers, and otherwise, in the neighbourhood of Headfort and Cong, add to the picturesque everywhere. But we grieved that this sublime scenery and wild country, so much resembling Wales, and in no manner inferior to it, as to natural beauties of the landscape, should be destitute of the enchanting rural cottage, its fragrant flowers, and stock of bees! The latter were once the peculiar favourites of the ancient laws of Ireland, when she may have enjoyed a golden and pastoral age, before the iron one of her petty despots came on! Bees formed, in that happy era, a principal part of the Irish farmer's riches, and were taken

great care of. From the honey was made the principal beverage of the people. It is, however, warmly to be hoped, that, from a general prosperity spreading through the island, her rural cottage and mountain scenery may soon equal those of Wales, and the cultivation of bees again add pleasing wealth to the peasant's garden.

The nearer we approached Cong the more picturesque it grew; and, as we passed a very small rustic cot, I heard an old Irish air sung with Irish words, by an aged woman, turning her spinning-wheel. It was mournfully and remarkably melodious, sung very slow, and with astonishing and true pathos; a skilful musician could easily have taken it down. This sweet and affecting memorial of the past days of Ireland, surviving all her sorrows in an humble cottage in Connaught, appealed powerfully to the heart!

Soon after Cong, placed on a little hill, with its rustic houses and neighbouring ancient abbey in the midst of this fine picture, presented itself to our view. It was once, in very ancient days, the capital of Connaught. It now much resembles a Welch village, and is nearly environed by streams and rivers of unrivalled clearness. In the central part of the village is an ancient stone monument, in form of a cross, engraven with letters in a very old character, which no one has been ever able to decypher!

With some difficulty we obtained a lodging in a comfortable cottage; and, having procured some good mutton and excellent potatoes, which our rural hostess is dressing for us, we have taken a glance of the venerable abbey, the abundant and clear waters at the mills adjoining, and the mountain views, which are really admirable from this secluded, though enchanting spot. The people are exceedingly civil in the village, and, without any impertinent curiosity, seem to enjoy our travels, and to be pleased that we are come among them. I am now obliged to conclude, and believe me, &c. &c.

LETTER XVII.

Cong, Sept. 22, 1817.

MY DEAR L.

THE earliest rays of a fine autumnal morning beheld us at the Abbey at Cong. We visited there the spot where lie the remains of Roderick O'Connor, the opponent and rival of Henry the Second, and the last of the monarchs of all Ireland. He was deposed, by his rebellious sons, in 1186, and retired to this tranquil and truly venerable spot for the remainder of his life.

In three years after died, at Chinon, in France, Henry the Second of England;—he, too, harassed

by revolts, and tortured by the rebellion, and turbulence of his sons!

Roderick O'Connor survived the English king nine years, having spent twelve at the Abbey of Cong. He departed from the world in extreme old age, in 1198. The grave of this unfortunate king is not now marked in any manner; but it is said, that his tomb-stone has sunk, and lies some depth beneath the earth. The precise spot is well known, and greatly respected by the inhabitants here.

In Leinster we followed the steps of Henry, and familiarized ourselves with his history, progress, and departure from Ireland; and now, in this western province, we pay our homage to the shade of the Irish king who resisted him!

The end of Roderick was far more enviable, and, indeed, more suitable to the decline of life than Henry's. In this delightful spot, whose walls and gardens were washed by the silent stream which glides past it to Lough Corrib, he devoted to religion and meditation the evening of his days. Henry clung to power to the last. Both felt the sharpened tooth of ingratitude from their own family, from those for whom they had sacrificed so much, and who repaid them with contumely, and by a junction with their worst enemies; but the sorrows of Roderick were buried in this sequestered retreat; and here he learned to despise the base and cruel minds of his own

kindred, who had so unjustly and barbarously used him. He discovered at Cong the emptiness of human life, and the painful and dangerous pre-eminence that royalty bestows. He had time to repent the despotic acts his situation, perhaps, more than disposition, forced him into, and fully to perceive the imperfection of the Irish constitution. From the time of his retirement here, he took no part in public affairs, and seems to have sanctioned the change of government under Henry the Second, by dignified acquiescence, under what he deemed inevitable, or from well-founded indignation at his own deposal. A crown, which any one may seize, is scarcely worth grieving for.

The conversation of learned men must have been a novel and delightful source of pleasure and consolation to a man accustomed to the turbulence of chieftains, and the flattery of ignorant followers.

The neighbourhood of Cong afforded him interesting walks, and he enjoyed here, perhaps, the only happy moments of his life. When he died, no rapacious sons, clamouring for his crown, or his wealth, disturbed his last moment, and he dropped into this grave in gentle peace. I recollected, at the close of these thoughts and reflections, the solemn old air I had heard on entering Cong, and it now seemed the requiem to his soul!

Memory wandered back to the hour when, in this ancient and then flourishing abbey, the king

expired. The solemn peal of melancholy music arises. The religious have performed the last rites. On the morrow the body is exhibited with decent yet royal state; and, if the crown and sceptre are wanting, the mild dignity of the countenance of the last monarch of Ireland supplies the deficiency. Affectionate crowds of the people, once subjects of O'Connor, press near, and their curses are bestowed, not on the English monarch, who had openly dared to meet him in the field, but on those cruel sons and kindred, who had torn the crown from their protector, father, and friend's head, and driven him broken-hearted and wandering to Cong!

The abbey is a very interesting and beautiful ruin, and deserves great attention. I made some sketches of it, but fear they are not worth sending to you. Some of the arches of the side-aisles are rounded in the Saxon manner; others very finely finished, and ornamented with carved stonework, of great delicacy and beauty. One part of the abbey was pointed out to us as the dining-hall of the friars. This abbey has a greater appearance of antiquity than any we have seen. The ground which formerly was used as such, is still kept as an orchard and garden, which run to the edge of the river. The clearness and beauty of its waters are matchless. The crystal wave permits you to see every thing on its gravelly bottom at a good depth, and fish are discerned with great ease.

The abbey was once very extensive, and must have held a great number of religionists.

What a lesson on the mutability of all mortal things, my dear L., does not this ruined pile afford us! What learning and genius bloomed here in sweet and undisturbed luxuriance, during the monastic era! How did that glassy tide invite to silent contemplation, and how much young genius of Ireland budded and grew beneath these walls, and on yonder green banks! I can hardly wonder that study prospered so much in her better times in Ireland. The calm retreats that learning chose formerly in this island, unlike the over-crowded and formal colleges of Europe, placed near cities, in modern days, were admirably calculated to promote meditation and knowledge. Their seclusion, silence, and romantic beauties, invited the soul to ruminate and expand.

No situation could have been more congenial to the labours of the mind than Cong; and the many similar ruined seminaries of learning and piety we have now seen in Ireland, amount in themselves almost to demonstration of the noble progress we are told she made in the bright paths of science, when England, and continental Europe (and we may add, other parts of the globe), slept in the darkness of comparative ignorance.

It is no unpleasing conjecture to suppose, that before civil fury and petty despotism ravaged the

land, that Ireland had similarly-placed repositories of learning, not less fertile in the produce than those of the monastic era. How silent are they all now! and how swiftly has fleeted from the mortal scene all that genius, whose fragrant blossoms were sheltered in them!

Here, too, my dear L., even kings may draw instruction from the past. At our feet lies all that remains of a monarch who governed millions, who sat on the throne of Brian Borom, that royal hero, illustrious by every loyal, personal, and philosophic virtue, who dethroned or made kings at his pleasure, and ranked with the oldest monarchs of Europe! But this king governed by despotism, and had but the nominal support of other despots. He possessed no real friends; he had no faithful subjects; other despots but envied or hated him; his people were slaves, and no firm bond united them to their king; a foreign army of brave adventurers came, and his brilliant crown trembled on his brow!

The heroic Fitzstephens, whom, in fancied thought, we saw land his martial band at Bag and Bun, touched the shores of Ireland, and the distracted despot (for there was no public spirit to rally round him), found his imagined power fade away. The remainder of his reign was a weak struggle. Could subjects fight for a good they never possessed? or a despot expect to embody a nation around him? His own family in

the end conspired against this unhappy king, and tore from him the shattered sceptre he scarcely retained. This once-renowned monarch, sheltering in these walls, became nearly forgotten, and his last, and only possession, this humble grave!

From the abbey of Cong, we turned our steps to Ashford, the seat of Mr. Brown, delightfully situated on the river, and at the head of Lough Corrib. Mr. Brown, jun. had invited us to breakfast, and received us with real hospitality. We crossed the river to go to the mansion, and were charmed with the admirable transparency of so fine a river. It flows gently past Ashford into the majestic Lough Corrib.

Ashford commands a very fine view of the lake, and its well-wooded demesne spreads along its shores. In winter, vast quantities of water-fowl frequent them. They go from hence to Galway in boats with great ease in the day.

Lough Corrib is one of the noblest lakes I have ever seen, and rather seems an ocean than a body of fresh water. Several islands can be discerned from Ashford; but to examine them all would require fine weather and considerable time. They, and the extensive shores of this lake, require planting, which they once had, for a few trees are to be met in some of the islands, and vestiges exist of many more. There are also ruins in one of them.

On taking leave of Mr. Brown, who omitted

no kindness to further our wishes of seeing Ashford, and the beauties of this great lake, we again crossed the waters of the river we had so much admired, and returned to Cong.

You may, perhaps, ask, Where does this so much-vaunted stream rise?—I answer, within a few hundred yards of the village of Cong. This extraordinary natural phenomenon filled us with surprize. In the central parts of a small piece of water, close to this place, burst from the bosom of the earth, great springs, which are equal to turning two large mills; assuming the form of a beautiful river, flow past the abbey of Cong and Ashford, and contribute much to fill the noble lake we have been visiting. The rapidity with which these mighty streams pass the end of one of the mills is very great, and whoever may fall into it cannot escape. Some fatal accidents have occurred here. An intelligent and obliging miller shewed me, from his mill, the different spots where the waters burst upwards from below; and as he knows the country very well as far as Sligo, gave me a great deal of general information. I was glad to know that every part was tranquil in Connaught, in the midst of great distress and sickness. Some ill-disposed and turbulent people have made partial outrages, but not more than is common to most countries.

This friendly miller was a man of superior understanding. It is impossible to walk through

Ireland, as we are doing, and not meet instances of quick and unerring intellect amongst all classes; but in the lower or middle class, where opportunities of improvement are inferior, it is most gratifying to witness it so repeatedly as we do. In the higher walks of life in the empire, every profession has its way of thinking,—every party has its creed and opinions: men think, as it were, by rule; and originality of idea is often considered by them a crime.

How delightful, then, in these wanderings, my dear L., to meet the unshackled emanations of the mind, produced without the hope of applause or profit, those great stimuli of the world! How pleasant, in the middle of that region of Ireland, long thought, and styled by your countrymen—*barbarous*, to hold intercourse with persons in the plain and humble walk of life, whose ideas and language exhibit more strength of thought in half an hour, than the orations of politicians do in three!

Although the general language is Irish, they speak English at Cong very well, and with grammatical propriety. This is very peculiar to Connaught, and there appears the tinge of the scholar very much through the province. Learning has not flourished here formerly in vain, and the "*quo semel imbuta*" of Horace may not inapplicably be used to the west of Ireland. A book, or a little drawing, always commands respect

and attention from the inhabitants. They have instinctive reverence for the implements of the scholar. There is no vulgar antipathy here to strangers, or English, but a wish to receive and give information accompanies pleasing manners, which are devoid of impertinence or shyness.

What materials have been left to slumber in obscurity and degradation, for so long a lapse of time, through the fatal blunderings of a bad system! How miserably has prejudice triumphed, reign after reign, in styling Connaught a country of barbarians! If you cast your eye on the map of Ireland, and observe the remote corner where I make these observations, and consider that they are no effusions of an heated fancy, or of an inflamed orator, but the offspring of practical experience; the remarks of the pedestrian, judging fairly of a people he sees, hears, and converses with, in and near a village, unknown to many in the northern and eastern provinces of Ireland, and to England; or deemed a savage haunt, if known at all; you will consider them of some value.

Near Cong, are the wilds of Connamara and Ballinahinch, of which it is the little metropolis. Those extensive districts, whose awful shores are washed by the Atlantic, and whose mountains and vales contain a hardy and most hospitable race, teem with corroborating proofs of the justice of what I have said. We are told here, that

though there are no inns to be seen in them, the hospitality of the people render them unnecessary and that the early and best virtues of the golden times of Ireland are yet practised there. But for the fears of the advanced season, and our wish to seek for our letters in Westport or Newport, we should now explore them.

Cong.

I laid down my pen, but now resume it. We have been to see what are called the "Caves of Cong," which might more appropriately be denominated "Grottos." As there is a small party of military quartered here, who are not much required, their serjeant, a pleasing, active, and well-informed young man, offered to accompany us to the most remarkable of these grottos, called the Pigeon-hole. It is about a mile from Cong. As we walked across the country to it, we discovered that its rocky and romantic surface was intersected by subterraneous channels, whose stony sides formed tunnels for volumes of water. As we went along, the serjeant pointed out to us several deep cavities, full of water, which emerged a moment, and then passed away beneath the earth. The solution of these phenomena, including that at the mills, is, that a vast body of water, from Lough Carrah, and Lough Mask, many miles distant, penetrates by subterraneous channels to Cong, and there bursting up, forms

various beautiful grottos, little pools, and the fine river passing the abbey and Ashford. It is positively asserted, that the different trout of Lough Carrah, Lough Mask, and Lough Corrib, can be discriminated in the latter lake; those of the first being of a silvery white, of the second blackish, and of the last reddish. These fish are said to pass and repass, in these dark and subterranean channels, for the purpose of spawning. The extraordinarily rocky nature of parts of the county of Galway, admits of what might otherwise be thought impossible and fabulous.

Passing a very rocky field, at the termination of our walk, we reached the "Pigeon-hole." It is a circular cavity in the earth, nearly covered at its mouth by some old oaks and evergreens, and is about one hundred feet and upwards of perpendicular depth, and thirty or forty diameter. You descend by many stone steps, made in times immemorial, for the purpose of getting water. As you approach the bottom, the loud rushing of a river becomes very perceptible. In a few moments the grotto widens, and you find yourself in the midst of dark and vaulted arches of rock, with a river, whose entrance or whose exit you cannot observe, rolling swiftly past your feet. Æneas never followed his sybil to a more awful or striking spot! All we had seen faded away, compared to this wonderful grotto of Coug! There was a kind of twilight, sufficient to shew

us the trout playing in the streams of this other world, and rendering the place more sublime from the dim shades of its rocky and verdant sides. We had procured a female guide, who resides near, and carries a light for the accommodation of such travellers as wish to observe the interior of this magic scene.

After some time spent in silent admiration, she set fire to a small bundle of straw, which she contrived should float down the dark stream, and cast another on the rocks. The whole cavities, river, and far-retiring rocks, were suddenly illuminated. The roof of these subterraneous regions was formed entirely of stone. The gloom of the caves on each side of this awful stream,—its audible and far-spreading murmurs,—our complete removal from the earthly scene and glarish light of day,—made an extraordinary impression on the mind!

As our guide, whose dress was party-coloured and bad, and whose form was marked by misery and age, rekindled the flames, and advanced on the inner rocks to give them more effect, the smoke,—the flame,—and herself, surrounded by all this midnight and splendid scene,—presented to our astonished eyes such a scene!——But, my dear L., you must behold it. You must,—you, whose poetic mind could so well embrace and describe every feature of it,—you must behold this awful grotto of Cong, and you will admit

that I have not exaggerated. You will then say, I think, that our neglected Ireland contains one of the most surprizing natural curiosities in Europe. Let Mrs. L. come also, and her charming fancy paint with magic pen this unrivalled scene! Surely, never did the Muses find a more solemn silent retreat. Never did Helicon's cool stream appear more soul-entrancing! Nor did Petrarch, at his loved Vaucluse, whose waters rushed beneath dark recesses, ever find there a more poetic or sublime retreat.

The serjeant, who had before frequently seen this grotto, and who possessed a great deal of feeling and taste, enjoyed our surprize and pleasure, and assisted our sybil to light up this novel theatre; nor did his military dress and good figure appear amiss on the dark rocks. As the fire grew faint, and all the splendid picture sunk into its first gloomy obscurity, we turned to the visible parts of this subterraneous river, and slowly re-ascended.

What a pleasing retreat, in the heats of summer, for the students of Cong-abbey! What a place for deep meditation, for piety, and learning! Here might genius have drank deep of immortal stores of knowledge, and returned to the upper world invigorated and enlightened! Here might the venerable and care-worn king, whose grave we have just left, have forgotten all his woes beside the dark murmuring stream, and if

he had one friend at yonder venerable abbey, here might he have brought him, and confessed that all earthly pomp was empty illusion, and that a throne could confer no pleasures equal to those of this sequestered and inimitable scene!

On returning to Cong, we saw numerous other grottos, much inferior in beauty to that we had just left, but very singular and romantic. There is a handsomely arched one, entered by an easy descent, in Mr. Ellard's grounds. This gentleman has a most beautiful place, which he is greatly improving, opposite Ashford.

In the village of Cong, I am concerned to state, we met with great extortion at the cottage where we lodged. The Irish cannot sometimes resist the temptation of exacting double their fair claim, if a good opportunity offers; but this is chiefly in very humble inns, or temporary lodging-houses, when persons of genteel appearance go to them. They do not consider that they injure themselves, and deter travellers from visiting them again. There is very great want of an inn at Cong.

They have here a small manufacture of hats, made with lamb's-wool; and with some encouragement, the building a small inn, &c. &c. this might soon become a flourishing little town. The vicinity admits, and almost demands, planting. It would have the happiest effect; and Cong, well wooded, with its unrivalled grottos, its

reign. The Lord President Bingham governed with firmness and wisdom; and though their military ardour carried a good many, at the close of the queen's reign, to follow O'Donnel to Munster, when the Spaniards landed at Kinsale, yet the province remained quiet.

James, towards the close of his inglorious reign, began to plan the plantation, as it was called, of this fine country. The proprietors had prudence enough to satisfy him with a sum of money. Charles the First followed his idea; for, since Elizabeth, plantations in Ireland had become the means of raising money for the crown. In that monarch's unhappy times, Connaught remained tolerably tranquil, and was much restrained and regulated by Lord Clanrickarde, the representative of the De Burghos. Though the proprietors were goaded and oppressed by Wentworth, they remained loyal to the crown and favourable to good order.

In 1641, Connaught was little moved. In succeeding years it was always averse to the republican parties and generals, which the evil times of England brought forth, and was accordingly hated by them.

The nefarious plan of Cromwell's commissioners, to send all the dispossessed Irish to Connaught, was a conception worthy of those who had destroyed constitution, crown, and law in England. How often do we see men pretending

zeal for liberty and religion, and by making their assumed austerity the stepping-stone to power, which they grossly abuse! To force unhappy gentlemen and others into this province, already full, and where property was well regulated, was the most fiend-like deed that avarice, hypocrisy, and prejudice could perpetrate! The settlement of property had been sanctioned by three monarchs of England; and Connaught had shewn more loyalty to the English government, for half a century of general disturbance, than any other part of Ireland; yet these men, with virulent and fanatic rancour, that shocks the mind, decreed, that those whom they plundered in the east of their estates, should crowd on those quiet and innocent people in the west, and incommode, or dispossess, or live upon them! The truth is, the soi-disant republicans hated the Irish as Catholics, and natives of an isle they wished to seize. Connaught was Catholic and monarchical; it was to be punished by famine, civil confusion, and disease, the concomitants of an over-crowded population; and the rest of Ireland was to be formed into a republican ally of the republic of England! great misery naturally followed; and those who know the hospitable and generous nature of the Irish, particularly in the west, may well conceive, that humanity opened wide the door to starving, banished, and plundered fellow-countrymen!

These unprincipled and upstart commissioners had discovered that the Irish Catholics were monarchically inclined—admiring the name of king from early times, and reverencing government, under that name, even when most imperfectly administered to them; and preferring the dominion of one royal head to the tyranny of many, acting in the name of liberty;—they saw this, and formed the project of that banishment to Connaught, which has been erroneously ascribed to Cromwell. On his accession to power, he disapproved of it, and, in the government of his excellent son Henry, prevented its further execution. The force put upon their consciences alone alienated the people of Connaught from the English crown in any degree, and Lord Clanrickarde shewed a bright example there of a Catholic subject, the friend to monarchy in the empire, under every circumstance of insult and persecution! Had William, at that momentous period when James the Second and Louis the Fourteenth attempted to seize on Ireland, issued a conciliating instead of irritating and unwise declaration, after the battle of the Boyne, and marched to Connaught instead of Leinster, there can be no doubt but the people of this fair province would have received that king and military hero with affectionate enthusiasm. He could then have secured every place, passed on the Shannon, and defied the arts and arms of France! The war would

have been terminated a year sooner, and the empire been spared a great expenditure of blood and of treasure, as well as the risk of Irish and French valour expelling the English! The hills of Kilcommeden witnessed the military heroism of the people of Connaught; and the death of St. Ruth, perhaps, alone decided the day against the Irish. But William followed not the dictates of his own noble mind. He allowed party to speak; and the monarch was silent. He sent General Douglas to Athlone, whose army insulted and murdered the peasants; and a shameful repulse checked the English arms! Finally, after the denouement of Limerick, in 1691, France gained the flower of the Irish military; and party-blindness sent some of the most spirited troops in the world to fight, under foreign banners, against their own empire!

Connaught has since borne her privations with exemplary patience and sweetness of disposition. The language, manners, and original race, remain very much unchanged; and property is pretty well divided there. The great body, gentry and people, are Catholic; but they live harmoniously with the Protestants, who know how to value and respect them, and who are themselves a valuable acquisition to the province —adorned by education, liberality, and sound understanding, as they are.

In the rebellion of 1798, Connaught took little

part; and when Ulster, the favourite plantation of an English king, almost openly declared for a republic, and was disaffected from one end to the other, this western asylum of the Irish remained faithful to the crown, and gave a French force, which landed on its shores, a very cold reception, —none but a few hundreds of the lower rabble ever joining them! What a lesson to statesmen, such as those of the days of Elizabeth and James! who thought the exterminating the Irish, and solely colonizing it with English adventurers and mal-contents, the best mode of securing the island! How little had they read Irish history! —How little studied Irish character!—How little knew they human nature!—And how blind were they to the bursting germ of republican fanaticism in their own country!—an off-shot of which they laboured to plant in Ireland, and thus madly prepare the future overthrow of our noble monarchical constitution, of an hereditary king, and free parliament! Connaught remains to this day favourable to monarchy, and is feelingly grateful to our revered sovereign, for the benefits he has bestowed—under almost total privation it has continued loyal, grown as civilized as any other part of Ireland; and would, I am convinced, from all I have seen of her gentry and people, be ready to stand forth to-morrow, if civil storms agitated the empire, as one of the bulwarks of the throne in Ireland!

The royal house of O'Connor has faded into oblivion; and the petty despotism of Irish kings, or English barons, has ceased to afflict the intellectual people of this province! They feel the happiness and security of one great executive government, and can have the generosity to admit its merits, even though they still experience some degradation under it! Surely, my dear L., such a noble-minded and loyal people deserve to be relieved from it! Surely the equipoise of power in the empire may be improved, by judiciously admitting so many friends to monarchy into a better position in the balance!

Having walked through Connaught, from Galway and Cong to Ballinrobe, the Atlantic and the grand mountain-scenery of Galway and Mayo on one side, the rich interior and noble Shannon on the other, I have been led, on arriving at this town, to compress much of our conversation, and some of my former historic research, into this letter. We endeavour to travel historically, and I send you the results.

Our visit to the tomb of Roderick O'Connor caused many reflections, and the observations on a country he once ruled, has given us much pleasure. On our way here we saw "the Neale," a finely-wooded place of Lord Kilmaine's, on whom much praise is bestowed for great reduction of his rents. We arrived here as the evening-sun dressed the beautiful rural scene with

his golden colours, and in a small quiet inn we repose, and prepare for our excursion into the wilds of Mayo. Believe me, &c. &c.

LETTER XIX.

Newport, (Mayo,) Sept. 25, 1817.

MY DEAR L.

Ballinrobe is a considerable town of from three to four thousand inhabitants, and extremely well situated for inland trade. It wants a linen-hall; and with encouragement, which I believe the noble proprietor is well-disposed to give, may prove in time, when agriculture revives, a very flourishing place. A great number of the military are generally stationed here, who circulate a good deal of money. The ancient seat of Lord Tyrawley is converted into a horse-barrack, and is beautifully situated on the river Robe. We heard there was a great fair to be held at Lough Mask, near Ballinrobe, in a few days, where great quantities of linen-yarn are sold and sent to Dublin; and we had a great desire to see the assemblage of people at that beautiful lake, and the traffic carried on, but could not spare time. As Lord Tyrawley has a charming cottage on the edge of Lough Mask, we hope to see

its lovely scenes to still greater advantage, on our return, by visiting that accomplished and venerable nobleman, who will probably, at that time, be at his villa, as he is expected.

I am sorry to recur to the painful subject of fever, and to say, that near Cong and at Ballinrobe it has begun to spread.

We left Ballinrobe pretty early, and as the sun brightened through the trees, and glistened on the river, entered and passed through Creagh, Mr. Caffe's beautiful and improved place. A charming cottage is joined to some new building, which has a pleasing effect. Mr. C. was absent, but his steward shewed us great civility. As we passed along we learned that the price of labour was miserably low, from sixpence down to fourpence the day. The cottager may have some advantages from the employer, it is true; but what a state of existence, on six or seven pounds per annum, for a family! Mr. Caffe is planting a great deal on bog, which much improves the face of the country already.

Our walk from Creagh to Westport was long, fatiguing, and uninteresting. There was neither inn nor gentleman's house on the way, and such is the poverty of the people, that we could only get potatoes and salt, with some bad whiskey and water, as our refreshment the whole day.

We passed between Lough Carragh and Lough

Mask, the two lakes I have mentioned, at Cong, whose waters pass subterraneously from the latter to Lough Corrib. Lough Carragh is very handsome, and adorned by beautiful seats on its shores; the most conspicuous among which is Moore Hall, a place dear to science, and rendered eminent by the great literary talents of its amiable possessor. We had a distant view of Lough Mask. The glimpse was beautiful. The cultivation in Mayo appeared very respectable. We heard of fever along the road, and dreaded to enter the cottages. As we advanced to Westport, passing the Partree mountains, Joyce's country, and its sublime scenery of mountains, spread widely on our left. Crowpatrick, the highest of them, soared to the clouds, and our dreary walk began to be more pleasing.

The approach to Westport is handsome, and Mr. Denis Browne's seat, to the left, appears to much advantage from the road. It has a great deal of fine picturesque of varied lands, a small river, and noble back-ground of mountain. This gentleman, we learn, has done much public good to this county; and, in a long parliamentary career, been ever faithfully attentive to the interests of Ireland. We regretted that he was from home.

Entering Westport, we were very agreeably struck by the sight of one of the best small-sized towns we had seen in Ireland. It contains from

four to five thousand inhabitants, and has considerable trade. A good well-planned square forms the principal part of the town, and some handsome streets running into it the remainder. The linen-market of Westport is very good. Nearly £3,000 worth is sold there monthly, and about £1,000 worth of yarn. The shops and private-houses in Westport make a most respectable appearance. A very handsome hotel, superior to any thing we had seen in any country-town, a linen-hall, market-house, and other public-buildings, were agreeable evidence of great improvement in this retired part of the island. We passed along Lord Sligo's wall to the small harbour of Westport, which is convenient, and has useful accommodation. On our way the view of Clew-bay, with its numerous islands, the sublime mountains called the Keeh, (of which Crowpatrick is the principal), and of a cultivated country descending to the sea, filled us with delight. The declining sun threw resplendent glories over this noble bay, and the vast sweep of mountain scenery beyond it.

Ah, my dear L., how often is the pedestrian repaid all his toils, by meeting those enchanting pictures of nature in their happiest moment! He can pause, and dwell on the scene as he pleases; no noise or crowds disturb him; nothing incommodes him; and, breathing the sweet air,

he contemplates the divine landscapes a Deity, in his supreme goodness, has caused to charm and exhilarate the mind, and thus to give the weary spirit of man refreshment on his way through a world, which, otherwise, would be fatiguing enough! We returned through the Marquis of Sligo's demesne, who was abroad on account of a domestic loss. Westport House is a very large, and, indeed, magnificent building. The grounds and woods of this noble place are very beautiful. The town of Westport must impress every traveller with the idea, that a presiding hand had spared no pains or expence to make it such as it is. One seems transported to England, to a view of one of its most respectable country-towns. For this we are indebted to the late Marquis of Sligo, who was long a resident at Westport; and, we have been informed, has expended from £22,000 to £23,000 a year, in improvements! Such a man was truly a benefactor to this country, and his memory deserves to be respected for that true patriotic disposition which not only makes "a blade of corn grow where it did not before," but erects dwellings, and provides employment for human beings, who might otherwise pine in wretched cottages, with scanty food.

Lord Sligo has left an example which, when universally followed, may, indeed, civilize Ireland! The ebullitions of oratory too often spring

from a desire to convict and confound an opposing party; but such quiet beneficence as this late noble character's has the clear, and not-to-be mistaken object, of public good. A flourishing town and improved vicinity, rising amidst the misery of a generous but long-depressed people, is not only the noblest of all monuments for the late Lord Sligo, but a powerful lesson to the country and the government. No party-view influenced this departed nobleman's mind;—the doors of his benevolence were open to all;—and, studying to ameliorate the state of the country, he never stooped to minister to the passions of any party. We were informed on the way, and in the town, that Westport had suffered most lamentably from the fever or pestilence now raging. Many of its most estimable characters of the better class, as well as great numbers of the poor, have been its victims. The mortality, in general, is much greater when it attacks the better classes than amongst the lower. As I cannot but view this malady as an evil springing from the wretchedness of a great population, too long suffered to accumulate, and too much neglected, I sincerely trust, my dear L., that not only a wise precautionary system, for the future, may be adopted; but that, also, ministers may be roused to contemplate the subject deeply.

We have now walked over a great extent of country in Munster and Connaught; and from

the heavily afflicted city of Cork and its neighbourhood, to the towns of Westport and Newport, have traced a line of human misery, resulting from famine and fever, the very recollection of which appals! By this pestilence, the extreme privations of this people have been brought to full light, and although the government should now strain every nerve in the cause of humanity, and to relieve sinking nature at this moment, all temporary measures will but leave the wound slightly healed. If I could be heard by them, I would conjure your prince and ministers to look at Ireland as she now is!—to view her writhing under complicated sorrows!—to consider her patience and magnanimity under them, and not longer to abstain from such manly and wise investigation of her case, as might produce a vigorous remedy, preventing their future recurrence! In parliament there are members, on every side of its houses, human, intelligent, and liberal to Ireland! I would conjure them all to contemplate this picture, and to join in devising effectual and grand measures of permanent relief!

Having found the people of the west very civilized and friendly, we did not hesitate, on leaving Westport very late in the evening, to walk to Newport. Darkness soon fell around; but the distance of six or seven miles to this latter town was trifling. The night proved mild and fine, and the sparkling stars, that studded the firmament,

gave us pleasing light. All was calm and silent, and a winding road led us imperceptibly on. The lights in the peasants' cottages began to twinkle, and the scene was exceedingly interesting. We were now drawing nearly to the close of our excursion in Connaught, and felt gratified at its results. We had exchanged, for vague and prejudiced opinion, pleasing truths; and considered, with quiet satisfaction, that while so many were passing their time on the Continent, we had made a meritorious effort to examine, in the most effectual of all ways, this remote and misrepresented portion of the empire. History joined her part in our reflections, and brought us to perceive how happy was Ireland under one great and single executive, and a free parliament, instead of suffering under the despotisms of innumerable petty royal houses!

In times of dark and pestilent confusion, engendered by so much aristocratical tyranny, we could not have walked, as we do now, unmolested, and without apprehension. If tyrannical or corrupt deputies, under the English monarchs, in former times, had afflicted and oppressed, many good and upright ones had benefitted Ireland. The whole had finally worked well; and the feudal and arbitrary institutions of the Milesian, or other Celtic races, been exchanged for the wholesome Saxon laws and constitution which had made England great and

happy, and are so favourable to the rights and liberties of man. No veil should be cast, with timid or prejudiced hand, over the records of the past. The two countries should read history, for the purpose of friendly and full explanation. How many transactions to this day are buried in gloom, or exaggerated through party-feeling! How much does the austere antipathy of the rigid politician of England still condemn the Irish, without considering their sufferings, provocations, and wrongs! How much do the warm-minded, but unreflecting in Ireland, misjudge and pervert the actions of England! Let history be perused with amicable eyes, on either side the channel, and on summing up the errors of all, readers will close the page with a sigh for past horrors, but with a delighted ejaculation to Heaven, that they are not likely ever to stain it again! Such reflections insensibly carried us to Newport. We arrived very late, but were directed, with much civility, to a small inn. There we met a most pleasing reception. Mr. Archboald and family made us very soon forget our fatigue; gave us a neat supper, and exceedingly good beds, and were kind enough to procure from the post-office the long-desired letters.

Newport is situated on a beautiful river, which runs into the bay of Clew, is a small town of fifteen hundred or two thousand inhabitants, and possesses many natural advantages. The sur-

rounding scenery of mountain is very grand. The reek and Crowpatrick, on the Westport side; and, on the other, Nipheen, and a long range of mountains, tower above the adjacent country.

Sir Neal O'Donnel's handsome seat ornaments the town much. He received us to-day with great hospitality and kindness, and has shewn every wish to facilitate the objects of our tour. Planting is alone wanting to make this place rival parts of Wales in beauty. A good linen-market is held weekly, and nearly two hundred pieces of linen sold in it. I was extremely well pleased to learn that the linen manufacture increases very much, and that last year's sales have surpassed any there for fifteen or twenty years.

Sir Neal has given a great deal of flax-seed to his tenantry this year, which will do great good. As a resident-landlord, not very long in possession of his estates, he has already done great things. A linen-hall, and some other public buildings, as well as other improvements in and about Newport, are projected by him.

The fisheries here are excellent, but want assistance. Great quantities of salmon, mullet, and other fish, abound.

The environs of Newport are very handsome. The view from Melcomb-hill of Clew-bay, and its archipelago of islands, transcends any thing

we have seen. There are near four hundred islands in this bay,—some of considerable size,—some cultivated,—and others quite verdant. As the sun illumined this enchanting scene to-day, I thought it quite divine. The sea was calm, and the golden rays of the noble orb of day glowed on its bosom.

Within a mile and a half of Newport is a fine lake and salmon-leap, surrounded by wild scenery, and only wanting trees to make it equal to Wales, or Italy. On returning from it may be seen a ruined abbey, situated near its extremity, with very picturesque effect. The Rev. Mr. Mahon, the rector, has a charming cottage, and tasteful gardens, enriched with choice flowers and shrubs, on the river-side, at a short distance from this town, and has proved how much the hand of taste can, in a little time, do in this highly-gifted country. This gentleman has shewed us great politeness and hospitality. The worthy agent of Sir Neal O'Donnel, Captain Taylor, has also very much facilitated all our wishes by unremitting kindness, and in all his conversation displayed an enlightened and acute mind.

Since our arrival here, we have visited Lough Con, distant ten or twelve miles from this. Our walk was romantic and wild. We pursued our way through a long tract of mountain-country, encompassed by sublime scenes.

From Lough Corrib the whole country, reach-

ing to these parts, appears diversified with numerous lakes. If trees adorned this country, it would not yield to Switzerland in wild beauty. As our walk extended, we found ourselves at the foot of Nipheen-mountain, which overlooks all the neighbourhood with majestic air. On passing it, we obtained a charming view of the barony of Tyrawley, rich in corn and varied agriculture, but nearly ruined, we hear, by the system adopted to prevent illicit distillation; a system hostile to agriculture, to revenue, and the peace of the country. It is melancholy to say, that scarcely any spot of this country is exempt from pestilence, and, I fear, has little medical aid.

We reached Lough Con in the middle of the day; and, at Prospect, the seat of Colonel Jackson, were received by Captain Jackson, his younger brother, with great politeness. He had just recovered from fever, caught by humanely enquiring into the wretchedness of the people around.

Lough Con is a noble piece of water, adorned by many fine places on its banks. Colonel Jackson's has a great deal of beauty, and is joined by Mr. O'Donnel's. Both have delightful views of the lake; and Nipheen, rising behind, gives grandeur and effect to the picture.

Near Lough Con, the French landed in 1798, at Killala, and marched to Ballina, but returned again. On their way to Castlebar, they passed

this lake on their ill-timed and inconsiderate expedition.

On our return to Newport, the evening closed fast upon us in the mountain-wilds. Our way led through a long vale at the foot of Nipheen. The mountain-streams gurgled beside us, and the setting sun poured his lingering and declining glories on the head of Nipheen. His shadow darkened the vallies and the road. How pleasing, yet mournful, was the scene! Neither foreign nor domestic warfare disturbed it. The sound of water, or the occasional croak of the distant raven, was only heard. Soon, the last rays of the sun disappeared, and the gloom of the mountain-vales suddenly thickened round us. Far from any habitation, or from mortal ken, we committed ourselves to Providence, and lost not a thought on fear. But on emerging from the low grounds of the vales, another scene awaited us. The moon, breaking from the darkened side of Nipheen, spread her silver light on every thing. The cascades of the passing streams glistened in her beams. The late gloomy shades vanished, and the sweet night-scene harmonized the soul! Thus pleasingly surprized, and accompanied by the fair queen of midnight-hours, we rapidly pursued our way to, and shortly arrived at Newport.

You see, my dear L., the pedestrian has not much to apprehend in this country, but I do not

recommend such experiments to be too often made. For ourselves, we must bear testimony to the honesty and innocence of the people at large, among whom we have at all hours walked; but there are *mauvais sujets*, no doubt, in some parts, whom it would be rather unpleasing to meet. Yet, I think, the whole body of the country equally untainted by disaffection, or dishonesty. Near, and in great cities, I cannot say so much; as there the Irish character appears to less advantage in the lower walk. Surely, these people have great and singular merit, at this moment, when famine and fever drive them to despair;—surely, they have no common merit,—when genteel persons may wander among them, without arms, and, confiding in them, pass unmolested!

As we have had several days repose at Newport, and the hospitality of Sir Neal and Lady Catharine O'Donnel has made us enjoy ourselves very much, we shall commence our final excursion to Erris, with fresh vigour, very soon.

Believe me, yours, &c. &c.

LETTER XX.

Newport, Oct. 9, 1817.

MY DEAR L.

NEWPORT had been unexpectedly enlivened by the arrival of a number of American ladies and gentlemen, who were very nearly lost on their way to Liverpool, from the United States, on the dangerous coasts of Mayo; and the society of our Newport friends increased by the addition of some well-educated and pleasing people, when the captain of the American vessel was good enough to take us, in a boat he employed, to his vessel, which exactly lay in our way to Erris.

We started the first of this month, and I proceed to relate to you an excursion which amply repaid all the toil and hardship it occasioned. Take the trouble to examine your map of Ireland, and to discover on the coast of Mayo the island of Achill, the promontory Coraan, Black Soda-bay, and the Mullet. There we directed our course. The day was tolerably favourable, and our boat scudded through the varied scenes of Clew-bay rapidly. The numerous islands, and the sublime mountains of the vicinity, rendered the voyage delightful; and our worthy captain steering our small bark, we had a good pilot and pleasing companion united in one.

Our boat-men chiefly spoke Irish, and the beauty and grandeur of these novel and remote pictures, every moment shifting, and succeeded by fresh ones, very forcibly recalled the mind to ancient days.

You may smile on my theory, of a golden age in Ireland, but there is no impossibility in the case; and it is a glad relief to the mind to fly to it, and repose there, from the dreadful series of oppressions and calamities this amiable people have been compelled to endure from bad institutions, and the long-continued misrule of numerous despots!

Early history makes mention of a Milesian king, resisted by the aborigines of the country, who made what was called a plebeian war against the military aristocracy fastening upon them. This chieftain, or king, resorted to the Scottish Picts, and brought their forces to aid him in the subjugating to Milesian tyranny the peaceful inhabitants, who wished to have their own independence, and moderate government of a patriarchal king. Tyranny prevailed, and Milesian kings established themselves. We were going to visit a relic of the ancient race, if it any where existed.

I must leave you, my dear L., to decide as you please on the subject, and shall hasten to introduce you to the interesting spots we have explored. As we reached Achill-sound, at the

extremity of which lay the American vessel, lately so much endangered, the wind and tide proved contrary, and we were obliged to land at Achill-bay. This was just as we could have wished. Achill-bay, or the small Achill, is an island, inhabited by ten or twelve families, who cultivate a little oats and barley, some flax, and potatoes; have some sheep and cows, and follow fishing when weather permits. They all speak Irish.

When we entered the little bay, whose silvery sand appeared plainly through the deep and transparent wave, and got on shore among these good and simple people, several of whom spoke English very well, we seemed to realize the page of Homer, or the not less interesting days of antient Ireland, before her Milesian conquerors came! The shape of this island is truly picturesque, being composed of two small mountains. This little society lived contented, far from the world, undisturbed by its noise or folly, and unallured by its wealth. They, however, had felt the distress of the times; their produce brought little; and their rent, which they paid in one sum, in common, was become too high. They had no priest to perform the offices of religion, which was a grievous inconvenience, and their going to a place of worship was rendered almost impracticable. Their island supplied some turf, but not a tree grew upon it.

In summer they found it pleasant, but in winter most dreary. The Atlantic washes it on all sides, and its impetuous waves, during a storm, must make an awful uproar round it. The people were cheerful, obliging, and hospitable. We were received in a respectable cottage, as friends just arrived from a distant expedition. A snowy table-cloth was laid in their best room, and excellent potatoes, milk, eggs, and butter, very soon set before us. All this was done by the mistress of the house and her daughters, without affectation or awkwardness. The good man and his sons, well-dressed young men, who followed fishing, conversed with us in a very intelligent manner. This family refused any payment whatever for our dinner, and only regretted that the short time we had to stay prevented our having a better repast.

An old man, between sixty and seventy, accompanied me to the summit of one of the mountains, with as much activity as a young lad. The view from thence was charming—of Achill, the mountainous main land, and sea. My companion spoke with great good sense, and lamented the severity of the times, but without acrimony. I could long have remained to enjoy the prospect, but time pressed. We descended to the cottage where we had dined, passing a few reapers in one of the small fields of barley this island boasts.

There was an originality about these people I had not anywhere seen. Their minds, calm and contented, were sullied by none of the odious passions of envy, revenge, avarice, or inordinate lust of power, which fill the breasts of so great a portion of mankind. They wanted nothing, and had no tormenting desires for riches they could not use, and splendour they could not enjoy. The men had sufficient occupation between agriculture and fishing, mending nets, and occasionally going to Newport or Westport. The women had their household cares, spinning, and mending or making clothes, to attend to. Some of our friendly host's family came with us to our boat, and bade us farewell affectionately. We embarked, much gratified with their kindness, having experienced how faithfully they adhered to the spirit of the ancient Irish law, which says, —"The most holy men of Heaven were respectable for their hospitality; and the gospel commands us to receive the sojourner, to entertain him, and to relieve his wants." But I was sorry these islanders had not more comforts, better gardens, out-houses, cattle, and more fowl. They were, however, happily exempt from fever,—a great blessing at this moment,—and free from any of the miseries attending extreme poverty.

We now proceeded up Achill-sound; but the wind was adverse, and we were compelled to land

on the larger island of Achill. The American ship lay at its farthest extremity, and we had a walk of five miles, in a dark evening, before we could expect to procure a boat and passage to the ship.

Achill is a large island, of singular situation. It is nearly the most western and remote spot of Ireland; contains about five thousand inhabitants, and is the sole property of Sir Neal O'Donnel. They manufacture a great deal of woollen stockings, and some linen, and cultivate with great care all the arable parts of this very extraordinary and chiefly mountainous island. Our walk lay along the eastern side, through boggy and wet ground. Fortunately, an inhabitant of the island had taken his passage from Newport in our boat, and became our guide. The way was difficult, and most fatiguing; and night overtook us as we passed some good cottages. We met with great civility from these worthy islanders, whose habitations were comfortable, and farms tolerable. The language is universally Irish, but the majority speak English very well.

We had proceeded several miles, when it became extremely dark, and we in vain looked for a boat. We enquired at different cottages, and were everywhere received at their fire-sides with cheerfulness and hospitality, and their milk and potatoes bestowed with a very good grace. I

perceived in the countenances of many of the young women a Grecian or foreign style of beauty, quite different from the English, or the physiognomy of Munster or Leinster. They seemed modest and sensible; certainly, in the expression of countenance, manner, and gesture, quite different from those of Munster. The black eyes and hair, so common there, are not at all in Achill. We saw great quantities of stockings in sacks, in some of their houses, and flax. They seemed to have abundance of firing, and to be cheerful and contented, but complained of high rents.

After a long and painful night-walk among these friendly and honest islanders, we at length heard of a boat, which Captain Hillman engaged. We had a quarter of a mile to walk, and the men of the cottage, to whose friends the boat belonged, contrived torches, by placing burning turf on poles, which the wind kept quite flaming and bright. We thus got in safety to the water-edge; and a boat, with four active young men, rowed us in about an hour to the American ship. These islanders were very cheerful, and encouraged each other in Irish, as they rapidly urged the boat along; nor was the song omitted. This ancient national music sounded finely in the calm air, as we passed through the dark and picturesque night-scene. Innumerable stars sparkled in the sea.

"Qui, se spiega la notte, il fosco velo,
Nel mare emulo al cielo,—
Piu lucide, piu belle
Moltiplicar le stelle!"

We arrived at one o'clock in the morning, as the stars brightened our way, and the moon, struggling with surrounding clouds, frequently peeped forth. The American vessel was a noble one, of several hundred tons, and had sustained little damage; and from her captain we experienced the most pleasing attention on board.

The following morning displayed to us romantic and noble scenery on all sides. The mountains of Ballycroy, Koraan, Achill, and of distant parts of Mayo, formed a truly sublime and varied picture, as our vessel lay in the calm water, and the morning-sun played over the now quiet waves! The boats of Achill (the main land) crossed the bay, or approached the ship with provisions. We found an opportunity, after breakfast, of exploring part of Achill.

Mr. Conway, an agent of Sir H. O'Donnel's, coming to our vessel to visit the captain, lent us his boat, and we immediately sailed for the island. Its picturesque shores and lofty mountains rendered our short voyage very pleasing! We landed on a gentle declivity, and soon discovered that the most specious appearances often conceal a false and disgusting interior. Our

walk to the mountains of Achill lay across a boggy and soft plain, which sunk every step as we advanced. But we had been promised a fine view and great gratification, if we ascended the mountains, and scaled Menahan Point Head. As we reached the rising grounds, many comfortable cottages presented themselves, and in one of them, with very humble accommodations indeed, resided the priest of Achill. He was a young man of modest and pleasing address, and gave us all the refreshment in his power to offer —some very good milk! His conversation was correct and liberal; and his small library, containing, among others, some historical French works, seemed the chief society he could have in this sequestered spot! His emoluments cannot exceed twenty or thirty pounds per annum, if so much. Surely, my dear L., the situation of these respectable ecclesiastics deserves the attention of government; and, as the age of persecution has passed away for ever, some plan to rescue them from so much poverty and degradation is called for.

From the Rev. Mr. Macmarm's house we began to ascend the hilly sides of Achill, and soon reached the base of a range of mountains. After above an hour's toilsome climbing up the mountain-side, we gained the summit of a ridge commanding a great view; but we continued, without intermisson, till we reached the wished

point of Menahan Head. It is quite impossible to do justice to a prospect surpassing all expectation! Before us the Atlantic rolled his blue waves to the rocky shore or sandy beach of Achill. Numerous villages, small but populous, and reduced to a diminutive size from our elevation; lakes, rivers, and cultivated patches of fertile land, and intervening small mountains, were spread immediately around us below! On turning round, the distant scenery of the Keek and Crowpatrick, Joyce's Country and Connemara, of Nipheen and neighbouring mountains, of those of Ballycroy and Koraan, and the far-stretching lands of Erris and the Mullet running into the sea, astonished and delighted the eye, by such a profusion of sublime picturesque as we had never witnessed before! The day was fine; the sky and sea of a bright blue. All around was profound silence. The presence of the Deity was every where! His awful hand had fashioned all. Clew, Black Roda, and Broad Haven Bays, Clare, Ennistore, Ennishea Islands, were seen by us, and Achill-bay, that hospitable little spot, so recently visited. On the summit of Menahan a small heap of stones lay, to which Mr. Bald, engineer and surveyor, a gentleman of unquestionable genius, resident in Mayo, had added varieties of the greenest moss; and that plant vulgarly called "London pride," formed a couch of great beauty around it. Here reposing, what

a scene for contemplation! How truly contemptible appeared the bustle and the pomp of a distant and anxious world below! What toil! What passions raised for momentary and evanescent triumph! *There* all the stir of commerce, the noise of cities, or the clash of arms, the pale and anxious statesman, the noble vainly elevated by a name, the courtier accustomed to smile, and bow, and flatter, the patriot languishing for power and followed by crowds of expectants, princes moving in splendour and bristled with etiquette, professions of several kinds preying on the community, and profiting by their wants, or their weakness;——*here* the quiet occupations of agriculture, the early labourer stealing to his work, the fragrant breath of blooming nature, and the morning-hymn of a thousand birds!—yet anxious passions tear the rustic; envy, avarice, and suspicion, often corrode his soul; the noble, for a coloured ribband, or another sounding name; the rustic, for some petty emolument, or his share of power, feels the same! The love of money has pervaded all! To accumulate with anxious rapacity, and spend in selfishness, is the principle of too many. To do what is good or great is lost in the desire to get money. Such is that world below! Happy if one could remain far removed from it; but the command of the Creator impels the mind to take a part, and contribute what man can to public and domestic

happiness! This sublime theatre, composed of so many grand scenes, and formed and coloured by a mighty artist, long detained us in silent admiration. How majestic those mountains! How placid the blue Atlantic! How interesting this island, with its agriculture, hamlets, and fisheries beneath the eye! We descended at length very rapidly, an inhabitant of the island having accompanied us. As the mountains were tolerably dry, and a soft verdure met the foot with elastic pressure, our descent was nothing impeded, and required a good deal of activity. Our guide ran with ease, and we were not backward in keeping up with him. The fine prospect lessened; we approached nearer to the lower grounds, and soon reached and mingled with the cottagers of Achill, leaving our lofty speculations behind, and glad to repose on level ground! Achill forms a small republic in itself; and the peaceable manners of these simple and good people render them happy under their own customs. They have small and bad roads; and several hamlets, chiefly on the sea-shore, whose houses, built with round stones and without gables, have a very singular appearance. They are free from the parties or factions of other parts, and rarely see strangers among them. They have neither physician nor lawyer, yet are healthy, and submissive to the laws. They are exceedingly hospitable; marry young, and have

comfortable dwellings. As mountaineers they are naturally very active, and have an independent manner, very agreeable to meet. They have few diseases; but have not escaped fever, which is beginning to make ravage among them. They fish in summer, but very little in winter, as the sea is very tempestuous at that season. The want of a market-town is severely felt by them. None is nearer than Newport, a distance of three or four-and-twenty Irish miles. Petty traders accordingly buy up their stockings, linen-webs, butter, and other commodities, at a low rate, and sell them again at a high price.

Neither dispensary nor hospital are within thirty miles of these islanders! They have abundance of sea-manure, and would bring cultivation to the greatest perfection; but a bad system, common to much of Connaught, reigns here. The fertile grounds are let in a sort of tenancy in common. The hamlet divides a portion of land among its inhabitants, and all are bound in one lease to pay a certain rent. If one family is less industrious, and cannot make out their share, the rest must supply it. The happy plan of each small farm having its garden, lands, and boundary independent of another, is not practised here. Accordingly, there is less improvement, and there exist continual causes of discord in the small community. One portion of the divided land may be better soil than another, and the

latter pay the same rent; a stranger may come in to inherit a part, having belonged to a relative, and call for a new division, which the landlord may grant, and the whole hamlet be thrown into confusion by a fresh partition. The inhabitants of it are too much in the power of a landlord, and are pledged for one another in a way quite destructive to rural independence. The landlord does not get as much rent thus, as he would from small independent farms; and has more trouble than they would occasion. The custom, however, is very ancient, and in no manner to be ascribed to modern landlords, or their agents. It is, perhaps, coeval with primitive times, and may have suited pastoral or agricultural life of more simplicity than the present, and a state of property less rigidly defined or valued than now! Small societies, for the benefit of mutual protection and aid, may have lived in this way very well. No love of money then reigned. The thing itself was unknown in Ireland at a remote period, as her old laws shew. This vestige of patriarchal life marks, in very distant days, simplicity and purity of manners, freedom from avarice, and exemption from all petty despotism, rural liberty, and general tranquillity! I think it proves great antiquity in the people here, but the custom were now—"more honoured in the breach than the observance,"—and if quite obli-

terated by all landlords, calling in these leases of hamlets, and granting separate ones to each tenant, great improvement and much happiness would follow. The gentlemen are very well disposed to aid the people, and, perhaps, have rather acquiesced under than sanctioned the custom.

Tithes are paid by the islanders of Achill, and as they are universally Catholic, and many have never seen a church or minister, seem here a very ungracious exaction.

The people of this island are extremely intelligent. They converse with ease on most usual subjects; have a love for information; are respectful, but not mean to superiors; are tolerably educated, reverence the laws, and are quiet and loyal.

In the autumn of 1798, when the French landed, a very few young men of Achill, filled with that military ardour common to the Irish, joined the invaders, and were never more heard of. The example has had strong and efficacious consequences, in leading the whole community to reflect on the fatal miseries of foreign intrusion. Their insular state, and many inconveniences, have rendered these mountaineers inured to great exertion. An Achill-man will easily go to Castlebar in one day, and return the next. The distance to it is above thirty Irish miles. A

small town, formed on the neighbouring main land; would give them great relief, and many advantages.

It appears to me, my dear L, that grand juries and government have directed their exclusive attention to roads; but that some money could have been very well applied to forming small market-towns, through or near which these roads might pass. Intercourse and passage are great goods in society; but convenient marts for the people are primary wants, and easily formed!

As to roads, perhaps it were better if the care of them devolved altogether on government. I think, too, if they appointed commissioners to report to them in what mountainous, or remote districts, small market, or post towns, with a dispensary and apothecary, were much required, a vast deal of good could be done by money there applied, and now flowing in perfectly useless channels. I should hail it as an auspicious day for Ireland, when such a character as the present Irish Secretary, intelligent as he is, resolved to have the true state of Ireland inspected, and then determined, instead of money passing through the hands of great men, or stagnating in partial institutions, now out of date, (and only making many useless places) to apply it to small country roads, to country manufactures, country market-towns, dispensaries, and

fisheries! He would economise thus more in a year than his predecessors have done in ten; and, by making the army less wanted, through this wholesome and cheap progress of comfort and civilization, save the nation much useless expence! I think things could be pointed out by a pedestrian, that he might not disdain to know, and would be beneficial for England as well as Ireland; but the great derive their information from other sources.

On leaving Achill we took leave of our friendly young priest, whose simple refreshment of milk was again offered, and accepted.

We left him in his humble cottage with sentiments of esteem and pity. Placed in this most remote and sequestered isle, without any society suiting the education he had received, and without such a rural abode as might increase his means, and give him pleasing occupation, he was performing sacred duties to his fellow-creatures, and truly following the example of his great Master. We bade him adieu, hoping, at some future period, to find him more comfortably situated!

We regained our vessel in time for dinner. Captain Hillman had some gentlemen of the revenue on board, and Mr. Conway. We spent a pleasant evening, and went home with the latter in his boat, much indebted to the worthy and sensible captain for all his very friendly offices.

The tide caused us to set out late, and we had almost a midnight voyage to our new friend's residence; but that kind guide brought us safely to his sweetly-situated cottage, near Castle Duna. His nephew, a young priest, accompanied him —well-educated, sensible, and pleasing. Here we found what we had heard of parts of Connaught thoroughly realized.

As there are no inns whatever, you are received at private and genteel houses, and well and agreeably entertained. They "receive the sojourner, and relieve his wants." In Mr. Conway's house we had excellent beds, and the very best linen. Mr. Conway gave us a hearty and unaffected welcome; and the following morning a breakfast of the best tea, eggs, cold meats, and hot cakes! The character of our host was very manly and independent, full of excellent sense, and offering the picture of that of the Tyrolese Hoffer to our minds.

The environs of Castle Duna are wild and very interesting. Mountains towering in all directions; the island of Achill, and the beautiful Black Roda Bay, Achill Sound, and Ballan Bay, formed a noble landscape. In winter it must be extremely grand. Here, as at Achill, vast numbers of sea and wild-fowl resort. The wild swan is very common; plover, curlews, ducks, &c. &c. Rabbits are abundant; and in the neighbouring river, at the proper seasons, vast quan-

tities of salmon are caught. The fishery belongs to Sir N. O'Donnel.

From Mr. Conway's happy and most friendly abode we proceeded to cross the river I mentioned; and, leaving Ballycroy, entered the barony of Erris. A long direct road led us through a flat and very uninteresting country, where the cottages were very poor, and the people spoke nothing whatever but Irish. They had, however, small gardens, vegetables, and some flax; and their farming is far from contemptible.

As we advanced we found better land, and a more smiling appearance of things. A very new species of manure struck us. It appeared thrown on ridges of land like half-whited cotton, and was a sort of sea-moss. In its first state, when cast up, it is red and very soft and mucilaginous. When spread on the earth and exposed to the sun and weather, it assumes the appearance which caught our eyes so much. It is prodigiously rich, and yields three or four crops without renewal. It has only been thrown in within these seven or eight years. They have not tried wheat with it, as that grain is very little grown in this part of the country; but I am sure it would answer for it.

As we left the long tract of flat ground, which covered an extent of nearly seven miles, we began to enter a neck of land in Erris, called the Mullet, and had Broadhaven Bay on our right, and

Black Roda on our left. The sight of very improved farming and well-cultivated land, gratified us much. Agriculture spread its delightful colouring to the edge of the arm of the sea opposite to us, and at our hand prodigious fine crops of oats were falling beneath the sickle.

Good habitations, and a well-dressed, sensible, and friendly people, appeared on all sides; and in Connaught's most sequestered and western parts, we discovered scenes not much inferior to those of the barony of Forth! Fine fowl, turkies, &c. good cattle, respectable out-houses, were to be seen, and the calm independence of unoppressed agriculture. Amazed and delighted, we often stopped to look round. In the extremity of the west of Ireland, in that Connaught, so long and so much misrepresented, which in England may be thought a barbarous and dangerous wild, we beheld a country well cultivated, tranquil, and civilized, and no whit inferior to England herself. In the remote parts of that side of the island, where the English never came till modern times introduced them, we saw as much civilization, and better agriculture, than in Leinster in general, their original settlement.—Oh, statesmen! read the page of history, and study human nature here! The human plant need not be fiercely torn away from the soil to create civilization! Let it be irrigated by the sweet stream of conciliation, and enriched by

genial knowledge; it grows luxuriant, and well repays the benevolent cultivator's care. All the works of agriculture flourish under its shelter, and care and good government, like the paternal and judicious gardener, easily regulates the willing stem and branches. Good and various fruit is produced. Nor is the skilful graft to be omitted, or despised; it improves it:—for so we have seen in the barony of Forth, and, in modern days, in Connaught itself. But statesmen who madly attempt to eradicate, or contemptuously neglect the wholesome crop of a vigorous and indigenous people, will ever find that it overpowers their feeble plans, and brings their cares and their old age to a sorrowful conclusion!

In reading the history of Ireland, my dear L., what a painful conviction springs up, that by this kind of fatal error England has caused to herself centuries of anxiety and expence. What generous minds have sunk in the struggle!—Shall I speak of St. Leger!—of the gallant commander Sir John Norris, dying of broken hearts!—of Essex foiled and ruined here!—of Spencer, disturbed and dying in obscure wretchedness!—and of many others?—Nay, did not your immortal Queen Elizabeth drop into her tomb, worn out, and subdued by her Irish wars, formed on this wrong principle? Did not its consequences hasten the fall of Charles the First?—the overthrow

of your constitution?—and retard the glorious William in the full tide of glory?

We read in these historic pages that one Stukely, an Englishman, disappointed in his wishes by the Irish government, in Queen Elizabeth's reign, went to Spain and Italy, and obtained assistance from the Pope and King of Spain, to invade Ireland.

Going to Portugal for additional supplies, he met the spirited, romantic, and ill-fated king Sebastian, who promised him, if he lent his small force of Spaniards and Italians, for his expedition to Africa, that, on his return, he would farther powerfully aid him, and accompany Stukely to Ireland! Stukely complied, and was lost, as well as the king, in his unfortunate enterprize against the Moors! Had things happened otherwise, and Sebastian, flushed with victory and glory, put his promise into execution, can any person say how far such an heroic character, precisely uniting the Irish feeling, might not have succeeded?

Lord Edward Bruce nearly overthrew the English power in Ireland in the reign of Edward the Second; and, but for his envious jealousy of his brother, which lost him the battle of Dundalk, might have triumphed.

A respected gentleman, now in office very near the royal person, may recollect an expression of mine, used with honest freedom some

time ago, in the palace itself, "that in time of war, a man capable of being a William Wallace, could do a great deal in Ireland." In fact, my dear L., a great and mismanaged population is so prolific a source of disorder and danger in a state, that men of animated and heroic souls require great steadiness of mind and principle to prevent them from impelling the mighty mass, if it were only to better regulate it!

As we walked, well-pleased, through these fertile and populous scenes of agricultural life in Erris, the evening began to overtake us; but we had been told to avail ourselves of the hospitality of the country, and we fearlessly trusted ourselves to it. We had heard of Mr. Henry Nash's house, and found ourselves near it. The modest mansion sat on the side of a gently-rising hill, overlooking the sea. Taking short paths through the fields, and those advantages within the pedestrian's power, we arrived there as the gathering shadows of an October evening admonished us that some shelter was necessary. Mr. Nash, on stating our case, received us with warm and true hospitality, introduced us to part of his family, and, after a good dinner soon set before us, we spent a cheerful evening with this amiable and respectable gentleman, who is still a young man, and of truly polite manners.

The next day, after breakfast, he furnished us with horses to go to Bingham-castle, and accom-

panied us part of the way, to shew us some curious remains of antiquity on the shore, not more than a mile from Carne, the name of the hill on which is Mr. Nash's house. We rode to the spot, through great sand-hills and hollows, on the Atlantic coast; and, in a great sandy plain, were first conducted by Mr. N. to a circular spot, in late years stripped of great heaps of incumbent sand. There we saw vestiges of stone-coffins, formed by placing large flat stones at the sides, bottom, and head, in manner of a coffin, and there had been also a stone lid. When first discovered, some years ago, the skeletons of the dead were in them. They were scattered afterwards. Several skulls, and some remarkably large thigh and other bones, apparently long preserved, were lying near them. A little farther, we saw a similar spot, each about sixty feet in circumference.

We then proceeded a quarter of a mile farther in the vast plain of sand, and saw a large place, once inclosed by a wall, some of which remained, about three hundred feet in circumference. A division had been made into two parts of this spot, and one head, or grave-stone, stood in it. Skulls were scattered around. At some distance we observed another circular burying-ground, about one hundred and twenty feet in circumference, in the centre of which was a round kind of building, ten feet high, and full of sand.

Round this, were stone-coffins, skulls, and bones. Mr. N. said, that on the first discovery of these places, by the blowing away of the sand, the interior of the coffins had the appearance of having been scorched by fire. On digging a little in one of these coffins, a human rib was discoverable.

About a quarter or half a mile from these ancient remains, is the scite of the old city of Baldurrock. All these cemeteries had been covered with sand, which shifts greatly here, and lying in that manner for a lapse of centuries, unknown, had been recently uncovered. They are near the Atlantic sea. History cannot account for these monuments, as the mode of burying seems different from any thing ever known in this island. The Egyptians were fond of burying in stone caverns, receptacles, and coffins. The antiquity of Ireland cannot be doubted, and the mind staggers under conjecture as to these coffins.

Tradition says, a king of Munster formerly invaded Connaught, fought a great battle with its king and his troops,—was defeated with great slaughter,—and that these burying-grounds were then made for the dead. It seems not likely that enemies would be interred with such care and regularity, instead of being thrown into one large pit. The ancient city of Baldurrock, and these cemeteries, may have once been in the centre of extended lands; for marks of the encroachment

of the sea are evident. Ireland may have been joined to the now-distant islands, or formed part of the Atlantic continent, which gave name to the sea. Stumps of trees, and bog, are often seen on the strand here, uncovered by the violence of the waves.

These are conjectures: but that a very different state of things existed once at Baldurrock, is manifest. The mind endeavours to penetrate into the gloom and uncertainty of antiquity with pleasing and tremulous anxiety; doubts where it is advancing, yet longs to proceed and ascertain what it hopes or fears. On the eastern shores of Ireland, similar remains of bog and stumps of trees are to be seen, so that this island's former junction with Great Britain is not at all improbable. When this has been,—if such be really the fact,—no one can do more than surmise.

But this great globe, my dear L., may have undergone many greater alterations since it was first poised and impelled by the Great Creating Hand! What myriads of the human race may have blossomed and withered since that awful moment! seas have retired or encroached! and continents and islands been diminished or added to; who can pronounce! and what is left us but silent admiration of the Almighty Author, in every thing wonderful, beneficent, and over-ruling! not, as some unhappily think, gloomy, and avenging,

but clad in divine benevolence, and full of sublime wisdom!

As we left the cemeteries which have occasioned so much reflection, we perceived on the shore small boats, made of horse-hair, and wooden ribs, called coracles. They ride à calm or gentle sea wonderfully, and are moved by paddles. The men prefer them to the large row-boat, and very few accidents are heard of from them. The following is the description of such boats, in South Wales, by a tourist, which I transcribe for you. "The traveller may have seen, in his excursion down the Wye, a curious kind of fishing-boat, called a truckle, or coracle (in British, cwrwgyl), made of strong-ribbed basket-work, *lately covered with horse-hides*, but now with tanned canvas, formed like the section of a walnut-shell, and generally four and a half or five feet long. The truckle is scarcely ever made to hold more than one person, who is obliged to keep his balance well, by sitting in the middle of it, making way with a paddle, one end of which is rested upon his shoulder, while a stroke is made alternately with the other end. These boats are only adapted for lakes, rivers, or a very smooth sea, and are so light, that the fishermen throw them over their shoulders, and carry them home. They are in common use on the river Usk, and in many other parts of Wales, and are of very early origin."

The coracles in Connaught are larger than those thus described, and, we understood, generally manned by two men. Their antiquity must be very great; and, if I may venture to guess, they have been long before the Milesian conquest of Ireland.

At Baldurrock, we took leave of Mr. Nash for a few hours, and set forward on horseback to Bingham-castle. We reached it in an hour, passing, at times, through heavy sands, and the level but fertile peninsula which forms one side of Blackroda-bay. At some distance we perceived before us the very noble castle of Major Bingham. It is quite modern, and scarcely finished, but has a very grand air, and highly ornaments so flat a country as this part of Erris. It is built in the old Gothic style, and its front extends a great way. The sea washes the borders of a handsome lawn; and the surrounding scenery of mountains, the island of Achill, and of the ocean, spreading on each side of the peninsula on which the castle stands, is quite unique and grand. The picturesque is of the boldest kind. To those fond of the sea, and all its wild charms, I know scarcely any situation which would appear superior to that of Bingham-castle. The worthy possessor, and founder of this noble pile, received us with the most genuine politeness, and shewed us the handsome apartments, and small elegant adjoin-

ing church of the castle, not yet finished. The interior of this building is adorned by many paintings; and a covered green-house, connected with it, will form, when finished, a pleasing winter-walk in this exposed scite. Major B. had the goodness to shew us his farms and demesne, almost the whole of which he has, in the most praiseworthy manner, reclaimed and improved. The building of this castle must have given employment to great numbers, and still continues to do so.

A great tract of this country is Major Bingham's, on which he proposes to make considerable improvements; and thinks, I believe, of making a small market-town in some part of Erris. At present there is no post-office within from twenty to thirty miles of him or the other gentlemen of these parts.

We returned to a late dinner, much pleased with our day's excursion; and as Mr. Nash was kind enough to invite us to stay a day or two in this new and very interesting country, we promised ourselves more information, and gratification of our curiosity, than the opportunity of a transient hour could have afforded. We were not disappointed. We had been told at Newport, that a poet of respectable talents resided in Erris. We did not, however, know that he resided at Carne, very near Mr. Nash. This gentleman knew and

respected him, and invited him to meet us at dinner on the ensuing day after our visit to Bingham-castle.

Erris, it seems, has been distinguished in this portion of Mayo, as having produced many bright scholars, in Irish as well as English, and education has been always very much cultivated in it. Mathematics, poetry, and classical learning, have thriven here a good deal; and, in former times, it is said, even more than now. The peculiar situation of Erris, so remote from the perils, the glories, or devastation of wars, from corrupting ambition, or the rancour of factious parties, left it leisure to cultivate the Muses with success. Almost all the people speak English and Irish, and both well. This possession of two languages must in itself strengthen the understanding, and make ideas more clear and precise. The young men go out into the world to sea, the army, or traffic, and have a genteel address, very advantageous to them.

As Sunday morning proved exceedingly fine, I devoted a great part of it to mixing among these people in Mr. Nash's neighbourhood. They suffer from the system of tenancy in common, such as I have described to exist in other parts of Connaught; and also from that of duty-work, or day's-labour, due to, and to be called for, at the will of the landlord. The latter oppresses

very much, takes the small farmer from his own business, and gives him nothing in return.

Tenancy in common prevents individual prosperity, and binds the bad and good tenant unjustly, and indeed cruelly, together. It resembles the tyranny of Mezentius, and ties the living and dead together,—the sluggard, or sot, and the industrious man. Duty-work completes the hardships of that system, and deducts from industry, perhaps at the most inconvenient moment, the exertions it owes at home. The abolition of these systems, in the parts of Connaught where they exist, would do great good. This act of manumission by all the landlords, would invigorate agriculture and manufacture, and give the post of freemen to those too often now obliged to obey as slaves.

High rents are complained of in Erris, as well as in almost every part of Ireland we have recently seen. They act more severely, I apprehend, in the tenancy-in-common system than where individuals hold separately, for the sum calculated for the whole is more easily rated high than one separate rent. But as the population is, upon the whole, not so great in Erris, or other parts of Connaught, as in Leinster or Munster, and as there is not much of an influx of strangers to add materially to it, the same disorders have not been excited here on account of land, as I

have frequently alluded to in former letters. The mildness of the people in Erris tends also to preclude them. The agriculture in it is not so good as in the barony of Forth. In the former, a feudal system has existed time immemorial. In the latter, the rational independence of decent yeomen. The inference must be plain to the most unprejudiced in Ireland, that English laws and customs were favourable to freedom and to agriculture.

In Erris we see no green crops, good enclosures, or gardens; it is nature in her undress. But in the qualification and improvement of the mind, this interesting portion of Connaught excels most parts of Ireland. This people's persons are very good, well-formed, and active; their dress neat and genteel. They resemble French peasants in many respects. They have abundance of food from the vicinity of the sea, producing quantities of fish and shell-fish, and the fertility of the land, much arising from the vast heaps of the mucilaginous sea-moss thrown on their shores. They marry very young; the girls at twelve or thirteen, and the young lads at seventeen. Nature finds nothing to damp her operations in this happy spot, and the genial passion of love, which scatters the sweetest roses in the early part of life, inspires them to be happy as soon as possible. No cares for the support of a future family impede them; the soft smile

of Venus bids them early seize the golden moments of a fleeting life, and they obey. Accordingly, population is rapidly increasing; but great tracts of mountain and heathy land are still quite uninhabited. Their houses in general are neat, well-furnished, have good beds and linen, and are white-washed, and of decent appearance. Their crops are potatoes, oats, barley, and flax; but tithes are found very oppressive. The great wants of the people of Erris are roads and markets. The nearest market-town is forty miles distant from some parts of it. A new road is planned, with the approbation of government, it is said, from Castlebar to the Mullet; but the burthen a very large undertaking of this kind must lay on the land will be heavy.

The fishery of herrings at Erris is sometimes wonderfully productive, as those fish come to these shores three or four times in the year.

Weavers are numerous in Erris; they grow much flax. Many persons conversant in the linen-manufacture came to it in the year 1798; but although they have advanced the linen-trade, some think they will not benefit the tranquillity of the country.

The introduction of forty-shilling freeholders has caused many mountain-tracts to be subdivided, and farms to be established in them. In the wildest spots, until lately, they burnt their corn, instead of thrashing it, and harrowed by the

horses' tails;—a mark of extreme poverty, I think.

Having walked through Erris a good deal this day, I afterwards met Mr. Nash at Baldurrock, as we had appointed, where a patrón was held. A patron in Ireland is the festival of a saint, held at a particular place consecrated to his memory. The Catholics observe these holidays frequently on the Sunday, and combine religion and innocent recreation, not improperly, together. As I perceived the people hastening to Baldurrock, I followed. An interesting scene presented itself.

Imagine, my dear L., an extensive sandy shore, and hills,—a few cottages,—an unfinished chapel, —the Atlantic rolling near,—and an assemblage of country-people,—an unmixed remnant of the Irish nation, extremely well dressed,—of gentle manners, and socially enjoying themselves,—a row or two of booths, covered with canvas, containing simple wares and fruit. The picture was not only novel, but highly delightful. I entered the pattern, as prayers were performing near it by the priest in the open air. These good people, with their hats off, and kneeling, surrounded him. Never did I behold the Deity worshipped in a more affecting and sublime manner! Not the slightest noise was heard, but that of the softly-murmuring ocean! Not a thought was given, but to the great Deity, who looked down

on his adoring creatures! What a study for a painter! A Raphael, or a Poussin, might have returned from it instructed.

When divine service had ended, every one walked about, and diverted themselves in the pattern. There I observed this pleasing people at my leisure. The men were very respectable and orderly; the females possessed a great deal of beauty of the most delicate kind, and had fine teeth and hair. Their countenances were of that Grecian, or foreign antique cast, I remarked at Achill, and full of sensibility and modesty. How those charming eyes spoke! How truly graceful did these Erris beauties appear! In this assemblage every thing was harmonious and tranquil, —the voices of all were low and soft. The language was almost universally Irish, and spoken by the gentle fair ones we saw, sounded sweet and clear, whilst the smile from their lovely eyes dazzled, or the cordial skake of the hand, evinced their joy. Modesty, too, the first charm of the sex, adorned these charming young women, and no intoxication disgraced the men.

As I joined our party, Mr. Nash introduced me to the priest of Carne, the pastor of these good creatures. Mr. Dixon was an amiable and excellently educated young man, and had just escaped death from the direful fever which has penetrated here. The congratulations of his flock were be-

stowed with the best grace possible. There was neither servility nor familiarity, but blended respect and love.

In some adjoining cottages the music of the Irish-pipes resounded, and we visited the dancers. They shewed grace and agility, and, as all the Irish do, seemed fond of the dance, and excelled in it. The beauty of the females was here seen to great advantage. I observed in these cottages a primitive degree of simplicity in the transparent parchment used for glass in their windows. To us, who had now attained the extreme point of our walk, and had explored these remote regions, this entire scene was perfectly delightful. How many prejudices vanished! How many pleasing, social ideas succeeded! How delighted did I dwell mentally on my theory of a people happy, amiable, and civilized, dwelling in Ireland before the Milesians arrived! Was not this a portion of them, yet surviving the iron pressure and cruel conflicts of Milesian kings? Was it not evident, too, that English power had made no devastation here, since so unchanged and unvitiated a remnant of the Irish lived happily to this day under it? Good people!—No discontent, or disaffection inflames your breasts! Satisfied, under a paternal government, to cultivate your lands, to worship God unmolested, to live in social peace, without desire for accumulated wealth, or rage for power, your days glide on calmly; but it is

the duty of that government to save you from all remaining local oppression, and the injurious superiority of a few privileged neighbours! How great is your merit now, when thus tranquil, though still degraded! How glorious a task for that government to turn your tranquillity into joy!

We returned from Baldurrock to dinner with Mr. Nash. A new source of satisfaction was opened to us. Mr. N. introduced us to Mr. Barret, the venerable poet of Erris. He is a fine old man, between seventy and eighty years of age, modest, of conciliating manners, having the deportment of a plain English country gentleman, with all the mildness of polished life. His conversation was sensible, and the vivacity of the poet often broke out. He sung for us an air of Carolan's, with Irish words, and an additional stanza of his own composition. The tune and words went melodiously together, and had a charming effect. We spent an exceedingly pleasant evening with Mr. Barret, whose social powers improved. He favoured us with several English verses of his own composition, which he sung to different airs. Mr. B. was a schoolmaster for some years, but found the confinement of that kind of life irksome, and has long given it up. He resides on a small farm of his own, in simple but genuine independence. He owes nothing, and has but few wants: his books are his companions;

he writes poetry both in the English and Irish languages, and is quite content on five acres of land. I waited on Mr. B. the following morning at his cottage, where he received me with a hearty welcome, and in every manner a pleasing reception. I prevailed on this venerable son of the Muses to read me some of his productions in English. They are written in the manner of Hudibras, and have a great deal of point. Mr. B. is a satirical poet, and has displeased as well as pleased his neighbours on some occasions. Some years ago he wished to have his turf drawn speedily home, and sent poetical applications for their assistance, to all his respectable neighbours. They were so well penned, and so ingenious, that he succeeded with all. Mr. B. was good enough to translate for me some verses of an old Irish poem, on the battle of Clontarfe, when Brian Borom fell: they were not without merit. This fine old man expanded his mind more in this morning visit, than he had done the preceding evening: he told me he had not learned the Irish language grammatically till some years ago, but writes now, in English or Irish, with equal ease. I advised him to attempt some considerable work. "In this retired place (said he), no one to encourage, and little hope existing that any production of mine would meet any notice, I have long abandoned thoughts of that sort; though they did once intrude, when

I was younger and more ambitious;—but, since you request me to attempt something, I will do so, if you promise to read it and tell me truly your opinion of it." I assured Mr. Barret I would; and I sincerely hope to be able to announce to you, next spring, what progress this western bard has made! Shall we not, my dear L., if possible, rescue his strains from obscurity?

It is an extraordinary truth that Ireland, with all her poetic genius, has produced no epic poem. On her drama I sent you my remarks in a former letter, from Leinster. It is singular, that no great poetic work, of the heroic nature, has distinguished her; and I much incline to suspect, that the royal princes of the Milesian race, and many English deputies, were small encouragers of that noble vein of poetry, which aims at the highest things, and ill answers for the sickly taste of despotic or voluptuous tyrants. Homer composed his divine works in a country of free men. Virgil wrote before the republic was quite extinct at Rome, and under a mild and benignant chief governor, fond of the arts, and a friend to literature. Ariosto and Tasso caught the last reflected rays of the past glories of Italy. Milton, and some very noble modern English poets, have tuned the lyre in a free country; but Ireland, though eminently gifted, has been enslaved! Petty despotism, with all its endless genealogies, its pomp, and selfishness,

allowed not the vigorous emanations of free minds!

The most early times of this western isle are lost in night, and we know not what bard, coeval with or anterior to Homer, may have existed here. The waves of stormy times have passed over Ireland, and may have washed away the work of the historian, and more exalted effusions of the poet! We cannot pierce into that abyss of dark waters, and discern the luminous pages of long—long-departed genius! We must bow submissive to the Creator's will, and submit to our ignorance in common with other countries; which, also, have had their periods of glory, and darkness, in awful vicissitude!

The solution I attempt to give of Ireland's deficiency in the epic walk of poetry, may be nullified by the production from some hidden store of an Irish epic; but I imagine Mr. Macpherson, long ago, took the best parts of their beautiful, but irregular poems, from the Irish, and that no complete epic has been ever formed among them.

On taking leave of Mr. Barret, some young gentlemen, on a visit at Mr. Nash's, proposed an excursion to Doonamoe, a rocky promontory, washed by the Atlantic waves, to see some curious old fortifications there. As we wished to see more of Erris, we willingly consented to do this, and accept of Mr. Nash's hospitable invita-

tion to remain another day at his house. We set forward through a new part of Erris.

As we got some miles towards Erris-head, we found still better farming than we had seen; the people comfortable and well-dressed, and inhabiting commodious houses. In some we saw querns, or small stone hand-mills, of great antiquity, which they still use. Several hamlets, with considerable numbers of houses, were seen in our walk—the adjoining land let in common. Fever has made fatal ravage among them! In one cottage the father, two sons, a son-in-law, and daughter, were swept away within one week. A very young girl remained. As they are very far distant from any town, apothecary, or dispensary, (at least forty miles), the situation of these good people will be most melancholy, if fever spreads entirely among them. In ordinary cases, they can have their ancient remedies, and the powerful hand of nature for relief; but in this contagious malady, the fever-hospital, and prompt application of medicine, can only prevent death and depopulation. Figure to your mind, my dear L., a whole hamlet attacked by this plague—no medical aid near, or hospital! What must follow but a scene of horror too painful to dwell on! Yet such may be the state of many districts of Ireland this moment. Can any measures be too strong—any expence too great to remedy it? Road-making may assist tenants,

and relieve the distressed estates of many; but, in the mean time, the dead and dying may be in every cottage, and the vital springs of agriculture be cut off!

As we passed on, we observed how much corn they grew everywhere in Erris. It is very fertile, and Irish industry is unceasing in its toils, where it has the least glimmer of independence. Land is let at two guineas, or forty shillings, for somewhat more than an acre, which is much too high.

We perceive the general dress of the men to be light-blue home-made cloth, in the coat and waistcoat, and the other parts of the dress decent and good. The clumsy frize great-coat is little used among them. The women wear red-cloaks, neat gowns of stuff or cotton, and many have laced mob-caps, which are becoming and tasteful. The duty-work demanded by landlords is everywhere found a great grievance.

Our walk, this day, proved very interesting. The shores of Erris-head are sublimely grand! Great gulphs, and perpendicular precipices of dark massy rock, here meet the fury of the Atlantic wave, which, in winter-storms, becomes tremendous, casting great stones and flags on the grass above, and tearing and raking the whole strand with its mighty surge! Doonamoe point presents to the curious the spectacle of a

very old and massy wall drawn across it, with an entrance left, and a kind of large guard-house within on one side. In front stone-stakes, of great height and size, had been driven in, in manner of the chevaux-de-frize. The nature or cause of this antique fortification is unknown to all the people of Erris. Conjecture, the antiquarian's ally and friend, can alone pronounce. To us, who do not forget our visit to the memorable Bag and Bun, on the eastern coast of Ireland, this seemed something of a similar entrenchment as there, but far more ancient, and much stronger. It may have been formed by the Danes in their early invasions, and exhibits the strong kind of building they used; or, amongst the many more distant invasions, may have proved a temporary shelter against the fury of the disturbed inhabitants. Near it may have been performed actions worthy Greece or Troy. On the level plains adjoining, many battles may have been fought, and Baldurrock, or some other ancient city, may have sustained many an assault from the foe entrenched here. Warlike heroes have doubtless fallen in contests worthy of record; but the green turf covers them; their names and deeds are lost in the gloom of the past; no bard sung them, or his verses are lost; the same grave entombs all, and the swelling Atlantic, in his wintry-rage, washes the forgotten spot where their bones moulder to dust!

The wonders of these shores would require days and weeks, not hours, to explore! Caves running under the ground, into which the sea enters, and marine grottos, with lofty arches, are common here. The whole forms a scenery bold and awful beyond conception! Nature seems to have used all her powers to fortify the land against the mighty invader in the winter's tempest; but woe betide the hapless vessel which, driven here in the dire December night, strikes on the foam-clad shore! No chance of escape remains!

The owner of great part of the lands at Doonamoe, a gentle-manfarmer of very great intelligence and most obliging manners, accompanied us in our wanderings over these wild parts, and facilitated every research with a promptitude and activity that made us acquainted with a great deal in a short time. He offered us every hospitality, and did not omit to entreat us to return in another summer, and partake of all his house and farms afforded. How grateful this generous, unsolicited kindness, instead of the haughty coldness of the great, which so often shuts the door on the traveller and stranger, in more frequented parts of the world! Such, indeed, is the hospitality and rural virtue we have seen in Achill, Ballycroy, and Erris, that I may well apply to them the bard's beautiful picture of another country:—

"Turn we to survey
Where rougher climes a nobler race display;
Where the bleak Swiss their stormy mansion tread,
And force a churlish soil, for scanty bread?
Yet still, e'en here, content can spread a charm,
Redress the clime, and all its rage disarm;
Tho' poor the peasant's hut, his feast tho' small,
He sees his little lot, the lot of all.
Cheerful at morn, he wakes from short repose,
Breathes the keen air, and carrols as he goes;
At night returning, every labour sped,
He sits him down, the monarch of his shed,
Smiles by his cheerful fire, and round surveys
His children's looks, that brighten in the blaze;
While his lov'd partner, boastful of her hoard,
Displays her cleanly platter on the board;
And haply, too, some pilgrim, thither led,
With many a tale repays the nightly bed!"

We returned to Mr. Nash's to dinner; and having met one of his tenants on our walk, a young man of some genius, and fond of writing, had requested him to bring to us in the evening some of his productions. I shall, perhaps, surprize you when I tell you what they were.—Two dramatic works;—one a tragedy, and the other a comic opera! We bestowed part of the evening on their perusal, and found them very far from contemptible, though unfit for the stage. Their rustic author had heated his mind by reading dramatic works, such as he could lay his hands on, and, without sufficient education, had

made the not ignoble attempt to form some himself. Proceeding from such a person, so circumstanced, they had peculiar merit. The sanguine author expected fame and profit from them, and the painful task fell on me to disappoint his hopes, by sending him a note the following morning, encouraging him to farther and better exertions.

On the third day we bid farewell to Mr. Nash, to whose hospitality and unceasing politeness we owed so much;—to the Rev. Mr. Dixon, whose liberal mind shone forth in the loneliness of Erris;—and to the venerable Bard, whose poetry and conversation sparkling in his rural cottage, would do honour to princely mansions.

We turned our steps from this country with many lively emotions, and passing the neck of the Mullet, which joins the singular peninsula we had left to the other parts of Erris, we examined a projected plan for a canal, connecting Broadhaven and Blackroda-bays. Ireland must become more of a manufacturing country, and a happier agricultural one, before such extensive works are required. The population must be better adjusted before capital to any great extent will be invested in either branch of national wealth. The making very great public works in Ireland, constituted as it is now, is but sporting with public misery.

In our walks, we have seen canals, roads, quays, fortifications, and great buildings, little wanted or used,—the sad contrast to a nation's poverty, and an evidence of great superfluous expence.

Two young gentlemen accompanied us from Mr. N.'s; and one of them had the goodness to join me in a very pleasing excursion through the wild mountains of Erris, to Mr. Conway's. We passed Lake Keremore, a fine piece of water, and made our way by a small mountain-road, where

> "Wilds, immeasurably spread,
> Seem'd lengthening as we went;"

and where the most sublime scenery, without beholding a human being for miles, environed us. We saw many, many thousands of acres quite waste, which human industry, rightly encouraged, would soon convert into tolerable land and smiling farms. In like manner, around Newport, and in the barony of Tyrawley, great quantities of land of this description invite the peasant's toil. Thus Ireland can scarcely be said to be too populous till all these extended grounds be cultivated. Though very populous indeed, how far does it fall short of Holland or of China? In Connaught, the population only requires to be well spread, and liberally treated by landlords, to make it the happiest part

of Ireland. Many other portions of the island are similarly situated, but are less civilized and harmonious.

Passing through many a mountain-glen and dell, we concluded our long and fatiguing tour through these grand scenes, by entering a valley of great length. A few cottages were sprinkled here and there, and a river of much beauty ran through it. The people spoke nothing but Irish; and my friend, in whom was combined the appellations of guide, companion, and interpreter, found some difficulty in exploring our way. The urbanity of the cottagers was, however, great, and we often experienced the benefit of a guide in some young man, or lad, running a quarter of a mile with us, along-side my friend's poney, which he brought from Carne with him.

In this late excursion to Erris, we have heard the song resound sweetly from the cheerful peasant, bringing corn on the horse's back, as they do, from the fields, and were much charmed with the strains of music in the pure Irish taste, thus every where enlivening the rural scene; but this day our excursion was too lonely to meet it, and the cottages, few as they were, bespoke great poverty; their inhabitants tended a few cows and sheep in silence, or partook of an humble meal within-doors. Such solitude, equally barren of the crimes, the virtues, or the improvements of society, must always powerfully strike the mind

in a society like that of Ireland, where, in other parts, too little room causes so much flagrant disorder; as here, too much presents a mere desert to the view.

In this extended vale was good land, and charming situations for cottages and farms. There was no small road,—no village,—scarcely the human face divine, except in the cots of the poor herds we had seen. Instead of £20,000 expended on a magnificent road, or other public work in this county or that, half the sum would make many vallies, such as this, hum with human labour and industry. Excessive population in one place might be relieved by enlivening a desert in another; and by a simple operation of this sort (combined with judicious and well-planned emigration), might the whole island be saved from much of its misery,—government from perpetual care and expence,—our excellent judges from constant torture to their feelings,—and the calendar of crimes return to a common and ordinary size, and statesmen discover a cheap way of maintaining public peace in Ireland.

In viewing such silent wastes, one cannot avoid, also, regretting the nakedness of their scenery, from the want of trees. The ancient laws of Ireland adverted to woods, with peculiar care, and gave us the idea of this charming country once beautifully clothed by them. I confess, my dear L., I think some of the cares of a

cabinet,—some of the benevolence of a prince,—might be happily applied to renovating, adorning, and strengthening Ireland,—one of the noblest portions of the British empire,—instead of attending too auxiously to the minutiæ of foreign states.

The circumstance of the expence Ireland causes, is alone a strong reason for taking some new ground to avoid it. If her people be made happier, they will not be turbulent;—if not turbulent, they will be less expensive;—and if less expensive, they truly become the strength instead of the weakness of a state. Kings of England, from the days of Edward the First and Third, began to complain and feel how burthensome Ireland was! They too much omitted to search into the cause.

I pencilled these reflections in this "valley of solitude," as my companion advanced before me; but, rejoining him, we hastened, and as our way lay through boggy and wet grounds, we began to find it very troublesome. Discovering, through the means of an obliging guide, a way along the sea-shore, it became better. There great quantities of the mucilaginous sea-moss lay unused; and the bounty of Heaven was cast on the land without human beings to use it! Is it possible to avoid recurring to reflections, with such objects presenting themselves?

We arrived very late at Duna-castle, and found

a hearty welcome from Mr. and Mrs. Conway, and their nephew, the Rev. Mr. Conway. An exceedingly good dinner, and most hospitable entertainment, prolonged the evening till late. The remainder of our party had reached Mr. Conway's long before us. As Mrs. Conway gave us excellent beds, and the finest linen, we soon lost in repose the fatigues of this day. The following morning, after breakfast, we took a final leave of our worthy hosts. The thanks we offered were faint expressions of our gratitude for their warm and unaffected exercise of hospitality.

Our walk, on departing from Duna-castle, was made quite through the country. We pursued our way alternately through bogs and cultivated ground. We had left Erris, and were to make our day's journey through Ballycroy and Borrishool, to the house of Mr. M'Loughlin, a gentleman residing within six miles of Newport. The day was charming, and we proceeded for some time near the sea. Achill, with its admirably picturesque mountains and shores, highly adorned the picture; and the smiling works of harvest still went on in the country we passed through. Erris we had left far behind; and Ballycroy, with its varied and romantic scenery, intervened between. We learnt that rents, in general, were oppressive beyond endurance in these parts; and sighed, as we went on, to think that such misery must endure till landlords slowly yield

to the voice of reason, and the cries of the people!

As we stopped to enquire our way, at a hut of very small dimensions and built of turf on the side of a bog, which contained a man, his wife, and four fine children, we were told his short story. "Simple are the annals of the poor;" and, oh! my dear L., in those of one poor family how many annals of thousands of families may be comprized! The simplicity of the history is then lost in the magnitude of the wretchedness it may represent. The account this poor fellow gave, was, that he had a very good farm till last year,—the high rents had ruined him;—his things were all sold by auction;—and he was now existing on the bog-side, not knowing well what to do, and unable to procure daily labour! He was a young man of very intelligent countenance, and well formed. As we said we wished the poor people to be relieved, and, perhaps, would endeavour to do something to ameliorate their present misery, he listened and looked,—his countenance glowed,—his eyes filled with tears,—he cast down the shoes and stockings he held,—and instead of pointing out our way, ran on before us, to be himself our guide and guardian. He brought us to a small inlet of the sea, as our shortest way, and carried each of us across, the water reaching to his knees. For this service he

refused money. All was the impulse and the act of a few moments.

If gratitude was thus easily made to burn in one poor peasant's breast, my dear L., how might it be lighted up in those of millions! A similar character reigns among the Irish, particularly the people of Connaught. Their sensibility is extraordinary. It has been to them the source of much misery and little joy. England has never for centuries understood them; and the severe hand of the unfeeling elder brother has lain heavily on their bowed necks. Who could restrain the tear at perceiving this wretchedness,—these feelings,—this gratitude in the poor peasant at the bog-side?—in the fellow-creature and man?—This unhappy being had lost his paternal farm,—his fields, meadows, and well-known streams!

On our return through Ballycroy and Borrishool, we met many proofs of the distress of the people, and of the goodness of their hearts. They always guided us with cheerfulness through the best paths; and but for their friendliness, we should scarcely have accomplished our attempt of making a short way, as we intended.

The want of a market-town in some convenient part of Ballycroy is very obvious to the pedestrian. It is required for Achill, and all the country opposite to that island. Nor can there be a doubt but that government would give all pos-

sible encouragement to one there, and another in Erris. They would be public benefits, and greatly animate the agriculturists and manufacturers. But it is the duty of landlords to do their parts in such undertakings.

For my part, my dear L., I would rather see such towns rising up in modest usefulness, to benefit the population of this Hebrides of the west of Ireland, than hear of distant victories, or acquisition of new territories for the empire. Strength at home gives power abroad. In like manner are small market-towns wanting in the west and south of Galway. The ravages of fever more strongly impress on the mind of the pedestrian the necessity of such things. As we approached the barony of Borrishool, we heard melancholy tidings of it, and we no longer ventured to enter the cottages. Nothing, however, could be more noble than some of the mountain-scenes this day. A long arm of the sea, running far into the interior, assumed the semblance of a fine lake, encompassed by mountains. Unfortunately, they wanted wood, but wanted that alone, to make their grandeur and beauty surprizingly great; I have scarcely seen any thing finer.

As we came within sight of Mr. M'Loughlin's house, by ascending the mountain-road, we obtained a charming view of Clew-bay, on the shore of which it is situated. The declining sun mildly gilded the lofty mountains we had passed through,

and the sea behind and before us glowed with his evening-rays! We sat down on a hillock, to enjoy the sublime landscape around us, when two old men, mountaineers and peasants, approached and joined us. To our enquiries as to fever, they answered, that—*it was everywhere,*—spreading their hands! Of rents they spoke with despair; and, on being asked, if generally lowering them would relieve the country? they rose up with enthusiasm, as if catching the glimpse of hope; and, as they departed, their voices blessing those who would contribute to it, sounded loud and shrill in the evening breeze. The sound still vibrates on my ears! It was an involuntary burst of nature,—unsophisticated and simple,—and agonized by malady, oppression, and poverty!

Mr. M'Loughlin having heard of our approach, received us with great politeness and hospitality. An excellent dinner and wine, the conversation of a most pleasing family, and tranquil rest in the good beds one always meets in Connaught, made us quite forget the labours of a toilsome walk of sixteen or seventeen miles. The next morning the charming views of Clew-bay saluted our eyes.

Mr. M'Loughlin's house is beautifully situated on the water-edge, and commands a fine prospect. This worthy gentleman made our stay in every way agreeable, and pressed us to remain some days. His fortune, which is hand-

some, is spent in the country, and he fulfils in every respect the duty of a true country-gentleman, by protecting and encouraging his tenantry. We left his house with much regret. Such, my dear L., is the genuine hospitality of these parts, and such is the social intercourse of the traveller and stranger with the worthy inhabitants.

On proceeding to Newport, we passed a castle of the celebrated warrior and heroine Granvile. It stands at the head of a small bay. This female's memory lives in the tradition of the country, not for her amours only, but as a leader of fleets, and besieger of castles. An unfinished house of a Mr. Arbuthnot, an English gentleman, (I believe father, or near relative, to the highly-respectable secretary to the treasury,) is beautifully situated near this castle. He is said to have liked the country, and chose this spot; but, from reasons unknown, never finished the house.

On the ninth day of our excursion, we reached Newport. The very remote and truly-interesting portion of the west of Ireland we have seen, has afforded us pleasure intermixed with pain. The mind revolts at beholding an intelligent and industrious people loaded by any remnants of a feudal or oppressive system; but the great civilization, in the true sense of the word, existing there, imparts the rapturous conviction that Ireland has not needed anti-social plans, or cruel

laws, to tranquillize her! In Erris, one of the most distant points from the seat of English government (happily and probably long exempt from the tyranny of Irish or English despots), a mild and polished people exist to this day.

Neither the establishment of circuits and the terrors of law, nor the sword of power, or the planting of English, have caused this pleasing phenomenon. Education and religion have, time immemorial, flourished in these sequestered scenes, and their fruits have been such as I have endeavoured to give you some idea of.

Worthy people! how should I rejoice if it were possible, by any effort, to ameliorate your still depressed situation! Who could forget so much genuine hospitality!—the cheerful guide who ran along the vale or mountain-side—the ready and intelligent converse—the wish to oblige, without the thirst for money, or the desire to pry! May that day be not far distant when convenient towns shall arise, manufacture spread, malady be not dreaded, as now, from want of aid, and every farmer, looking round, see that each one's lot was "the lot of all!"

As I conclude this narrative, I cannot omit mentioning to you a singular circumstance. A very old man was pointed out to me at Newport, who seemed a claimant to the second sight, so often met with in Scotland, but never, within my knowledge, in Ireland.

This venerable man was eighty years of age, and stated, that forty years ago he was seized at night with an unaccountable and heavy melancholy, and saw revealed to him then, the miserable scenes of human suffering which now exist in Ireland. Every thing, he said, was plainly set before his eyes, and the impression was so lively, that his face became bathed with tears he could not restrain. He had never been used to low spirits before, or since; and, on his wife enquiring what caused such dreadful grief, he repressed her curiosity, and concealed what he had seen. It was not any dream, as he was perfectly awake, as was his wife, who always recollected the circumstance of his mysterious sorrow, though she did not know the cause. He was a person of some reading and education, and of a very strong and clear mind; spoke on history and past events with precision and calmness, and appeared to have nothing of the enthusiast about him. The vision he had presented to his eyes was not of wars, but of dreadful domestic calamities, as he stated, and the foreknowledge he then had, had ever since dwelt in his memory! This good old man confined himself to the statement of the fact. I shall in like manner, my dear L., leave the matter so, adding that such things are, at least, extraordinary.

Before I close this letter I wish to answer your enquiries as to the Irish harp and manuscript

poetry. We have not met, in our western tour, with the harp in any place; but an Irish harper, named O'Donnel, was very lately in this town. His playing was not remarkable. The harp is dropping into oblivion, and I am sorry for it.

Of Irish manuscripts we have heard little. Mr. Barret has a few, and shewed me some beautiful specimens of poems, written in the Irish phraseology. But in our pedestrian toils, it has been quite impossible to make all the researches we might have wished of this kind.

In Cork the Catholic bishop, who is a very excellent and exalted character, is forming a large collection of Irish manuscripts, and spares no expence in doing so. In other collections many may be found; but good translations of the best, in a pleasing and free style, are wanting. The Rev. Mr. Conway, of Ballycroy, has promised to translate and send me some Irish poems in his possession, which you may like to see, and which I shall forward to you when they arrive. There is certainly a love of literature in Connaught; and, during our stay in Newport, we have had many choice books lent to us. I see no reason why Irish and English literature should not be both cultivated in Ireland. All would tend to improvement of mind. Having laid down my pen to take leave of Sir Neal O'Donnel, and to make the few arrangements a pedestrian requires, I have agreed to

dine with the family of this small inn, and to depart in the evening. I now, therefore, bid you farewell, &c.

LETTER XXI.

Castlebar, Oct. 15, 1817.

MY DEAR L.

I WALKED with one of the mountaineers of Achill to Castlebar. The road is pleasant, and the number of small lakes you see, interspersed through a fine corn-country, makes it still more so. The intelligence and acuteness of the Achill farmer were great; he conversed with equal facility in English or Irish, and his remarks were all drawn from nature and observation; nor is it too much to style such people acccomplished, who possess two languages, speak them grammatically, and clearly express in them the ideas of an independent soul. The lower order of English in the country, compared with those of Ireland, fall far short in this point of comparison.

Castlebar is a good town, of four thousand inhabitants, or more; and has been rendered celebrated by the French occupying it some time, after the discomfiture of the English troops in 1798. On leaving it, they received their first

check from the Limerick militia, commanded by the present Lord Gort. The service his lordship rendered the country on that occasion was a signal one. He prevented all farther assistance joining the foreign enemy, and gave time for the government at Dublin to take proper measures. They were not very extraordinarily energetic; and full credit must be given to the people of Connaught at large, who so calmly beheld a French force, for some time, victorious in the heart of their country, whilst the chief governor made a very deliberate progress indeed from the capital. In such cases speed is often victory! Since that period no French force has appeared on the shores of Ireland; but it may be too much for ministers to suppose, that no other invasion was projected or thought of. The army sent under General Humbert was ridiculously small, and evinces, in the then rulers of France, utter ignorance of this island, and of the art of war. From the rupture of the peace of Amiens, however, a fearful number of years elapsed, till the late obstinate and narrow-minded usurper of France immolated himself. For ten years did the patience and loyalty of the bulk of the Irish remain firm. They sent no invitations abroad; and waited with fond hope, that a benevolent prince would complete the fabric the revered sovereign had begun. To such people something is due. Whatever a heated and sangui-

nary few,—blinded by wild love of power,—by desire of revenge,—and by blind admiration of Bonaparte,—may have wished, or have thought,—the nation remained untainted and firm!

In all our walks we have found the grand body of the Irish sound and well-affected. But it were too much to expect, that if a formidable army had been thrown into the country from France, in the period I mention, among some, that a great deal of confusion would not have occurred, and, in many cases, even danger, from the military ardour and great sensibility which so peculiarly characterize this people!

I am truly concerned to find that fever has raged in a severe manner at Castlebar. It has proved mortal in many cases, and has continued a long time here. The heart sickens under the repeated observation of so great a mass of human wretchedness, and our toilsome way has been frequently made insupportably painful to us by it. We have had various escapes by entering cottages, or having linen washed in houses where persons, scarcely convalescent, were.

Castlebar is a place of considerable inland trade, and is a handsome-looking town. Its environs are pretty, and the ancient park of Lord Lucan, adjoining the extremity of it, ornaments it very much. It is the greatest linen-market in Mayo; the sales of the last month, amounting

to £3,300 worth of linen, and £1,900 worth of yarn. It is said here, that a communication by water with the sea could easily be formed, by means of neighbouring lakes.

The chief object of attraction in Castlebar for us was, however, Mr. Bald's celebrated map of the county of Mayo, which had been exhibited to the members of the House of Commons in England. Mr. B., who is a Scotch gentleman, of great taste and talent, resident in Castlebar, with the utmost urbanity, not only granted our request to see it, but shewed it us himself, and explained many parts of this superb work. The map is extremely large, covering a great part of a good-sized drawing-room when unrolled.

Having walked over nearly the whole of this extensive county, such a work was to us doubly striking and interesting. We felt surprize and admiration at this fine display of genius! The whole is executed in a masterly and novel manner, and presents to the view this vast county, with its mountains, ruins, vales, lakes, shores, and woods, so beautifully delineated, that the eye is never satiated in looking over them! The neighbouring islands, and Achill, proudly prominent above all were not omitted.

Mr. Bald has also formed a singular model of Achill, which represents that island with a curious felicity. His great work of the map of

Mayo has been executed for the grand jury, and occupied Mr. B. and an ingenious young gentleman who assists him, above six years! In it we easily traced our own steps, and Mr. Bald so clearly pointed out every other part of Mayo, that we seemed to have walked over them also!

On the subject of fever, he was full of information, some of which was so valuable as to deserve transmission to government. Alas! when we looked on this beautiful map, and its highly intelligent and talented author pointed with a long wand to various places unknown to us, where pestilence raged, how very melancholy did this exquisite geographical picture look! As Mr. Bald was good enough to invite us to breakfast with his family, we enjoyed his conversation still longer. He is occupied on some work, I believe, on local geography. Every thing he said was instructive.

As pedestrians, with somewhat differing, but not very uncongenial pursuits, we could all exchange those original ideas, obtained by actual inspection, and we all had but one opinion of the general suffering of the country, far exceeding what has reached the observation of the great and wealthy, or of government! Mr. Bald informed us, that fever was of longer duration than was thought in Mayo. This gentleman, it is supposed, will be appointed surveyor of roads in this county, if the newly-projected

plan of taking their management out of the hands of grand juries takes effect. The idea does the present secretary much honour; for certainly great abuses have existed, and much oppression fallen on the people under the old mode. It is impossible not to allow, as I have already said, very great merit to the present minister for Ireland, as one passes through this country, in many respects.

The alteration in the mode of appointing sheriffs is, in itself, a great benefit, and the secretary's very laudable vigilance in regard to the public money, demands the highest praise. The more the Irish people find that he wishes to rescue them from the effects of petty despotism, the more amenable will they become, and the more attached to the English government. But unless that gentleman direct his powerful mind to a revision and better formation of the magistracy, very incomplete indeed, I fear, will prove much of his most meritorious labours! On the political balance of this island, he has demonstrated a desire that it should remain as it is! I cannot help thinking, if he knew all the local grievance that has come in our way at various times to remark, that his upright and generous mind would revolt with the true spirit of a Briton at it, and that he would abhor the nature of party-policy mixed with religion, as much as we have done. "There is a cloud hangs over us,"

said a very respectable and intelligent Catholic to me, within these few days, "which extinguishes us whenever we raise our heads." A painful feeling to exist in the breast of man! Doubly so, when the depressed class are taught, that better privileged individuals are all government-men; and that opposition to them will be reported as disaffection to the king!

The public-buildings at Castlebar are very respectable. We left it in the middle of the day for Ballinrobe, and walked through a fertile corn-country many miles. Fever spread its baleful hand in too many cottages, and the mournful looks of numbers spoke volumes!

As evening began to announce the decline of day you will imagine us, my dear L., near Ballinrobe, and soon reposing in some humble inn; but an adventure awaited myself, instead of this. As I descried Moore Hall at a great distance, over-looking Lough Carrah, I determined, if possible, to see its worthy possessor, the author of the late "History of the Revolution of 1688," before I bade farewell to Connaught.

I set forward across the fields. I was sufficiently acquainted with the Irish language to explain myself, or I should have gone quite astray. Through the tangled dell and rocky field I made my path good; but often heard with sorrow, from an occasional friendly guide, of the prevalence of mortality, arising from

fever. The way was much larger than I expected, and I reached Mr. Moore's house with some difficulty, and very much exhausted. Fortunately I found him and Mr. Moore at home; and the reception I received from this highly endowed gentleman, and the amiable Mrs. M. banished all sense of fatigue, under which I was then nearly sinking. The mansion is a noble one, seated at the head of Lough Carrah, and is built in a foreign style. 'As I opened my window very early the following morning, an enchanting sight, just before the sun arose, offered itself. Lough Carrah, a fine lake of several miles long and two or three broad, spread itself before my view, with a chain of mountains to the right. A wooded island in front, and a fertile country, chequered with corn-fields and meadows, completed the landscape. The dawn glowed over the lake, and the birds sung as if in summer, whilst the crow and magpie picked their food. Suddenly the orb of day arising, swelled and magnified till the great circle was complete; but soon he was lost in an impending purple cloud, and softened grey tints fell on the lake, as the sky was streaked with gold; and the birds yet sung on the distant spray.

Lough Carrah is one of those lakes which pours its waters through the subterraneous passages at Cong; its sandy beach is of a silvery cast: and several handsome places appear in the

distance, near its shores. Such a situation, where nature smiled and genius reposed, was delightful to behold! How much so to the pedestrian! How pleased was I that I had deviated from the road for such an object! But it is thus the pedestrian enjoys and best uses his full liberty, by forming no regular plan, and taking advantage of every pleasant incident on the way.

To-morrow I purpose proceeding to Cuss Lough, Lord Tyrawley's villa. Mr. Moore is kind enough to invite me to remain a day at Moore-Hall. I conclude this now, by assuring you, my dear L., how truly I am, &c. &c.

Cuss Lough, (Lord Tyrawley's.)

I now write to you from one of the sweetest spots imaginable—Lord Tyrawley's cottage, on the edge of Lough Mask—where I have rejoined my companion, according to our arrangement, and where this venerable nobleman has given us a most hospitable reception. Cuss Lough commands views of the most lovely scenery in nature! A venerable wood nearly surrounds Lord T.'s cottage; and the wooded islands, far-spreading mountains sweeping round Lough Mask, and that noble expanse of water in its vicinity, nearly twelve miles long and proportionally broad, form the finest landscapes imaginable.

Mr. Martin's very beautiful and well-wooded place on the lake, adjoining Lord Tyrawley's

grounds, completes the enchanting scene! His Lordship comes here, twice in the year, for a month or six weeks, from his principal residence. This accomplished nobleman travelled in his youth over much of the Continent, and was in office a long time under the Irish government. His mind retains all its brilliancy, and his manners have so rare and extraordinary a degree of polish, that each person in his company feels himself gratified and exalted. True politeness is surely one of those virtues most desirable in society, since it is brought into action the oftenest, and embellishes and makes domestic life more happy than any other! It is difficult to leave Lord Tyrawley's company without being improved! He has now retired for ever from the splendid and busy scenes of former life; and has none of the disappointment of an exiled courtier about him. To courts and brilliant circles he seems rather, like Coriolanus, to say, "I banish you." And though he has felt the stings of ingratitude from too many, and been neglected in high quarters, where he merited thanks and attention, the suavity of his temper and characteristic cheerfulness sustain him wonderfully! He told me several very amusing and interesting anecdotes of Mr. Fox, of whom he was the friend in early youth, and who retained a pleasing recollection of Lord Tyrawley to

the last! You may imagine, my dear L., that the conversation of such a nobleman, and the scenes of his enchanting cottage, have made weariness disappear.

LETTER XXII.

Tuath and Atherne, Oct. 20, 1817.

MY DEAR L.

WE left Lord Tyrawley's on a very fine morning, and bid him farewell with sincere regret. Our walk through Ballinrobe brought us through a country of good agriculture and much corn. The last enquiry I made in Mayo, was in regard to the Irish wolf-dog. That race no more appears in Connaught; and we learn that the last of them were sent to Lord Taaffe, about twenty or thirty years ago, to Hungary.

We reached a small farm-house and inn half-way to Tuam, where we rested yesterday night. I grieve to say, that fever is to be traced from Castlebar the whole way to Tuam: many afflicting incidents of houses where the inhabitants had expired, and left them vacant—of others infected, and their neighbours afraid to approach them—and of others burnt down, to stop the spread of the malady—met us on our way. At

our farm-house they gave us a very tolerable reception, and we dined with the family in a very comfortable manner.

Pedestrians, like us, were generally supposed to be dealers in some small way, gentlemen's servants, school-masters, or surveyors; and we took no pains to contradict these ideas. We were treated with civility and plainness, and avoided the propensity to flatter, (too common to the Irish,) by the simplicity of our appearance, and the humility of our manner of travelling. The lower Irish could never suppose a gentleman would *walk* several hundred miles on roads and common country paths!

Our landlord's son had got some education, and in this cottage we found the Iliad of Homer in its original language, as also the works of Juvenal and Virgil in theirs.

We heard of dreadful ravages of fever in Roscommon, from the people of this small inn. High rents were also mentioned, as ruining and depressing the whole country.

A very ingenious young man, a land-surveyor, was described to us as having made a clock from his own invention and combinations. I went to see it, and found in his cottage a wooden one going extremely well, and apparently well-constructed. The maker of it joined our rural circle soon after, and proved a very intelligent, ingenious, and diffident young man. As conversa-

tion warmed him, he displayed many of the marks of real genius. We were now approaching the centre of Galway, a county which has a good deal of respectable yeomanry, and less of the feudal system and of vassalage remaining; than in Mayo. We perceived, in our evening's conversation, no dislike of England, or of strangers, but the contrary. Our host was a sensible farmer, and his son could deliver his opinion on the Grecian Bard, and the merits of Juvenal, very well. The surveyor was in every respect acute, and reasoned clearly and strongly. Here and everywhere we have found veneration and love for his present majesty. His benefits are, I perceive, strongly remembered!

Our map of Ireland was spread on the table, as we sat before a large turf fire. Our cottage friends examined it, and decided on our route to the Shannon with great intelligence and rapidity. They then began to enter into the objects of the tour; and, on my explaining what we had done, were highly pleased. We got exceedingly good and clean beds, and were reasonably charged. I ought to remark, that in all our travelling, except a few inns, the charges were too high; and that war-prices, in time of peace, at hotels and inns, are an imposition. The inn-keeper can now afford every thing cheaper; and, if his taxes be high, may expect, when things return to a right state, and

peace, commerce, and agriculture, bless the land for some time, that his custom will be greater.

We started early for Tuam, but, by lingering behind to examine an old castle, I had the good fortune to see a very charming cottage, pleasure-ground, and woods, of Mr. Blake, near Tuam, who not only allowed me to look at them, but invited me to an excellent breakfast, just then on the table. This gentleman introduced me, as a traveller, to his family; and by his urbanity and pleasing conversation, made an hour pass most pleasingly. Is not this genuine hospitality, my dear L.? and do I seem too partial to Connaught, in recording, in a warm manner, so generous a virtue, flourishing thus in it?

From Mr. Blake, who had been bred to the bar, I learned the approaching dissolution of Mr. Curran in London. Turn to my first letter on the walk to Bag and Bun, and agree with me that the coincidence of things is curious. At the time of setting out on that tour, we passed the country-houses of two very celebrated personages in Ireland, on the popular side. They were then in health. I have often conversed and spent many hours with both since. Now, as we conclude our Connaught and Munster excursions, they are both dropping into the grave! How awful the memorandum! How truly does life resemble our tours! a passage through various

scenes! and then, one gladly rests in final repose! Of these personages, one character, the prudent guide, as well as energetic leader of Catholic millions! the other, the most brilliant orator of Ireland; a patriot of considerable consistency, and not subservient to English party: both are passing to the silent tomb! I shall never again hear the animated and powerful language of Keogh! I shall never again enjoy the flashes, the wit and pleasantry, or the oratory of Curran!

We reached Tuam on its fair-day. The country appears very fertile around it; but fever was spread in every direction, and its afflicting consequences struck the mind with melancholy, though the day was fine, and the landscape luxuriant.

A vast crowd of people filled the town, well-dressed and respectable; cattle and various country commodities were exposed to sale. What may the extent of this population become in fifty or a hundred years? What new results may be expected? Shall another system be tried? or will the present one be continued till the mighty waves of a doubled or quadrupled population rise, and foam, and roar, over the heads of its rulers, in another century? These are serious questions. The evidence of prodigious numbers, which the pedestrian continually receives in the country and towns of Ireland, presses them upon him. As long as the body of the people are

depressed by want of privileges which the favoured few enjoy, they will be in some measure discontented. It is consistent with human nature that it should be so. As long as they are discontented there will be danger from the foreigner in war, or from a future Lord Edward Fitzgerald, or a William Wallace, in war or peace! As long as the population is augmenting, that danger is increasing; the quantity of materials becoming larger to which flame may be applied: and as long as such danger is before the eyes of British statesmen, they cannot consider the empire secure!

Arrived at Tuam, we had the pleasure of seeing his Grace the Archbishop of Tuam, and of communicating particulars relative to fevers, which happened to be unknown to him. This very venerable and most amiable prelate manifested all that hospitality and politeness which sit so well on high station, and shine so much in Connaught. At his request, we went to see his cathedral, which is one of the handsomest small buildings of the antique kind I have ever seen. The stained glass in its Gothic windows threw on its aisle a softened light as the evening fell. The Archbishop of Tuam has done the whole of these windows at his own expence. He has also made his own house extremely pretty. If it had been in our power, I should gladly have stayed another day to dine with the Archbishop of Tuam. His manners were so dignified, yet kind, that he

gained respect and esteem the more condescension he shewed. He pays much attention to a dispensary at Tuam, which has done a great deal of good. This worthy prelate is far advanced in years, but still enjoys the health of green old age.

We called on the Catholic bishop to mention the state of the country, as to fever, but did not find him at home. He is highly spoken of, and has taken judicious measures in prohibiting wakes, where a person dies of fever. This custom once seemed to me an ancient and harmless one. It is a corruption of some old practice, but leads to nothing but immorality and intemperance. The Catholic clergy would do well to suppress it entirely, or so modify it, that no drinking or singing were allowed, and none but relatives to attend. As the Irish are fond of dissipation, they make the wake the scene of it too often, and convert a mark of veneration for the dead into a waste of time (to say the least) for the living. Music and dancing, at proper times, should rather be encouraged in a vivacious nation; but it would tend a great deal to civilize Ireland, if the jollity of the wake was totally suppressed.

In walking through this country, it is impossible not to know and learn that many daring and profligate characters exist, which early habits of drinking, most of all, contribute to form. The

laudable pains of government and magistrates can never succeed in reforming the unruly, until the manners of the people be improved. The influence of the Catholic clergy can do a great deal in this respect, but not every thing. I am sure they wish to regulate their flocks as much as possible. Education has, however, much to perform, but poverty stands in its way. It is far from being so backward, however, as may be supposed. At the small inn where we rested at Tuam, the son of our hostess had the Orations of Cicero, the Æneid of Virgil, and some other Latin books, in his possession. Classical knowledge must always spread refinement and good sense; and I am very far, indeed, from the opinion of a popular writer of the day, that it is superfluous or useless.

The works of the greatest genius in Greece or Rome teem with historic and moral truths. They must expand and strengthen any mind; and the circumstance of such knowledge being acquired with pains, is favourable to habits of application and industry. Let these interesting works be all thrown aside, and an era of folly and ignorance must arrive. I should be very sorry to see Ireland without her classic learning, surprizingly diffused as it is through the rural walks of life. To the indigent scholar, his books are great consolation: in them, too, he finds the germs of eloquence and taste, which may con-

duct him to a happier state, and they are companions in the bleakest field or humblest habitation. Without such knowledge, presumptuous ignorance may dogmatize, and the weakest men, or most foolish women, become legislators. It preserves a just barrier between the idle and industrious, and prevents cunning from domineering over uninformed minds.

To classic knowledge England owes much of her glory. The manly sentiments of Grecian and Roman authors have taught her to improve on her Saxon constitutions, and blend both into her own admirable policy. The Irish seem born for classic lore; and it is really grievous to notice the early dawn of genius so prevalent, and to know that so much poverty and other depressing circumstances operate—

"To freeze the genial current of the soul!"

The population ought not to be set up to produce everywhere propounders of law, of medicine, or of religion. Professions requiring pains, time, and expence, fit men for these offices. But classic knowledge scatters sweet flowers, of which all may gather a few, and transplant them to his humble home with happy effect!

On the day after our interview with the Archbishop of Tuam, we very early pursued our way. The morning was cold, and very unfavourable. Nature looks very cheerless in October, when the

sun appears not, and the chilling breeze mourns along the naked fields. In Ireland, the want of trees is so great, that such mornings are often the most melancholy moments to the pedestrian. Galway is a country fertile in corn, and respectable for the industry of the people; but it has not the romantic scenery of Mayo.

We walked very rapidly to Monyvea, having looked at a large monastic ruin in our way, and arrived to breakfast in the midst of severe rain. As we had feared, the weather begins to break, and the termination of our tour at Killarney promises to be unpleasing. But we make the best of these things, and prefer the little hardships of coming winter to the extreme heats of summer,—often dangerous to the pedestrian,—and in this season of pestilence it might be highly so. Monyvea is a very neat village, and the handsome house of Mr. French adjoins it. There is here, also, a large charter-school, containing one hundred and forty girls. I could not help wishing it had been given as a temporary fever-hospital. Nor do I, my dear L., speaking impartially, perceive that these institutions are of any public utility. They prove a heavy expence to the state, and can never accomplish the views of their original founders. All these young girls will form wives for Catholic young men, and go to chapel with their husbands. The arguments applyed by the Romans to the Sabine women

will ever prevail, and love finish what gentle constraint began.

The charter-schools were formed on a weak system. The great tide of religious opinion has flowed on, undiminished and unchecked. The buildings remain,—useful chiefly for a few individuals,—and instructive, as a lesson to tyrants, that the mind is beyond their reach; and that, though men may be exterminated, religion cannot be conquered. As the system is long ago abandoned, these schools must be looked on as very expensive incumbrances, in times like these, when the difficulties of the state are great.

From Monyvea we proceeded to this small town of Athenree, under heavy rain. We heard of fever every mile! The priest of a neighbouring parish, who officiated on Sunday, died last night in one week's illness. Ecclesiastics and physicians are greatly exposed to danger. What lives might not small fever-hospitals have saved! Athenree has some very interesting ruins of a castle and abbey. It was once a fortified town, and of great note in Connaught. Much of the walls and towers remain. Near this town, in ancient times, fell, in the bloom of youth, Feidlim, the warlike young king of Connaught.

LETTER XXIII.

Athenree, Oct. 20, 1827.

MY DEAR L.

In one of your former letters, you put a serious question to me—Do I think an amicable arrangement could be made between the English government and the Catholic prelacy of Ireland? I shall endeavour to answer you, and remove your doubts in a satisfactory manner. But I must premise, that you assume the statesman, and consent to view the whole subject without a grain of the prejudice or passions of any party. It is a most interesting one, and on its happy solution by English ministers depends, in my opinion, the lasting connection between the two countries.

You will read what I advance and suggest, I trust, with a favourable eye; knowing that the immortality of this great empire is my most ardent wish, and that I scorn all party-purposes; that I have no ambitious views to stimulate; and that, in uttering the most honest and well-advised opinion I can on this occasion, I labour to serve a throne I reverence, whilst from its royal possessor I seek neither rewards nor titles.

Let me premise a few things.—In Ireland, Elizabeth tried an experiment which she was in-

duced to make by narrow and prejudiced advisers; not merely to establish the reformed, but to totally destroy the Catholic religion in Ireland! The words of Sir James Ware deserve attention on the subject. Speaking of her first parliament in Ireland, he says,—"At the very beginning of this parliament, her majesty's well-wishers found that most of the nobility and commons were divided in opinion about the ecclesiastical government; which caused the Earl of Sussex to dissolve them, and go over to England to consult her majesty on the affairs of this kingdom. These differences were occasioned by the several alterations which had happened in ecclesiastical manners within the compass of twelve years. The Earl of Sussex having been in England some months, returned again, and took his oath as lord-lieutenant of Ireland. Within three weeks after which came letters from her majesty to him, signifying her pleasure for a general meeting of the clergy of Ireland, and *the establishment of the Protestant religion* through the *several dioceses of the kingdom.*"

The Bishop of Meath rejecting all the offers of government, was imprisoned and then deposed. The queen thenceforth assumed the power of nominating all bishops; and thus, by a stroke of pure despotism, seized on all the temporalities of the Irish church, expelled the old possessors, and introduced men agreeable to

court in their stead. She did not form a new church-establishment, and divide the temporalities, which might have been done, or permit the old one; as under Henry the Seventh, to secure to her the affections of the people, but deprived the most eminent, learned, and pious men of which christianity could boast, of all rank, support, and protection under that English government, which their body had so long aided and strengthened.

"These alterations," says the impartial Ware, "in church and state, so affected the Roman Catholics in Ireland, especially the natives, that (being encouraged by the pope and king of Spain, who promised to send them some assistance) they rose up in a great body, under Shani O'Neal, and rebelled against her majesty, consuming all before them with fire and sword, wherever they came within the English pale. So that Queen Elizabeth had now a hard task upon her hands, what with Francis the French king, and Mary queen of Scots; what with Philip king of Spain, and the pope, with his excommunications, besides her enemies and rebels in England and Ireland."

Having commenced with injustice, Elizabeth was compelled to continue with persecution. The Catholic clergy were not allowed even to meet or sleep within the gates of Dublin; and all the inhabitants were ordered to attend the

new religion, on pain of being fined each Sunday! That venerable body, which had done so much to civilize Ireland, to resist petty despots, and introduce the English government, was now consigned to the utmost misery and degradation, by Elizabeth!

The horrors which followed this great, but, in this point, ill-advised queen's whole plan of misgovernment, I have often had occasion to allude to and describe! An enlightened historian of England thinks she acted contrary to her own conviction, in the affair of religion! What a pity; if her exalted mind was chained down by the rancorous hand of any mercenary or misguided party!

James the First banished these suffering and unhappy clergy of Ireland, in three several decrees, for ever from their native land! In his last, the year before his death, he enjoins exile in forty days, and forbids all converse with these clergy after that time!

Stung by this cruelty to the Catholic clergy of Ireland, Pope Urban forbade the Irish to take the oath of allegiance to the new sovereign! Party-violence raged between the Roman Pontiff and the reformed church of England. From that cause, the unhappy clergy and people of Ireland were yet to suffer a great deal. Political fury in the empire was soon to fill their cup of sorrow to the brim!

Charles the First made a proposal early in his reign for the toleration of the Catholic religion. Unhappily, it was not pleasing to the Protestant bishops, and they protested against it. Instead of this, that king was compelled, by party, to issue a proclamation against the Catholic clergy of the empire! In the middle of his reign, the Catholics of Ireland had grown into new consequence, from their numbers and respectability; and their clergy, with unshaken fortitude, had borne contumely and persecution, and still survived the cruelty of England. When the throne tottered, they declared for it; and if Charles could have been sincere, and, renouncing all his despotic plans, have resolved to be the father of his empire, he might have been saved by Ireland, and the balance of the constitution been preserved and adjusted. But the Italian prelate, Rinuncini, usurped the monarch's power, and inflamed the Irish Catholics and clergy to many improprieties! They had been long goaded, oppressed, and insulted. Now if the mind quietly contemplates the abrupt and tyrannical blow which, in the midst of civilized and christian Europe, prostrated a venerable and virtuous ecclesiastical body to the dust, can it be surprized if resentment instigated them at length to retaliate on an unpitying adversary when opportunity occurred?

The reigns of Charles the Second, William,

and Anne, present a hideous picture of renewed persecution against those unfortunate clergy. Enlightened times have discovered, that such conduct was unstatesman-like. Under his present majesty's auspices, this respectable and long-enduring body have been permitted to breathe in safety, to perform divine worship publicly, and to resume something of rank and station in a country to which they have been vigilant pastors under every discouragement. They have now no provision from the state whatever; elect their own bishops, who are confirmed by the Pope, and rely solely on the people for support. In very recent times their value in this island has been discovered and acknowledged.

The policy of Henry the Seventh has been found much better than that of Elizabeth; and government frequently find from them useful, zealous, and loyal support.

Previous to the union a proposal was made to the Catholic prelates, tending to obtain a control, by nomination, over them, and evincing a wish to contribute something to their support, if the first object was attained. The time chosen was exceedingly bad. The mind of Ireland was in a sort of duress after an unhappy rebellion; and an arrangement, then made, could never have been deemed voluntary! The matter came to nothing; but has been renewed in various ways of late years. And now your question—

"Can an amicable arrangement be made between government and the Catholic Irish bishops?"—comes directly before us. I think it can; but not in the manner contemplated by Lord Grenville and his party, or by some of the present ministers! Since Elizabeth took away all the temporalities of this body, and their seats in parliament, on what ground can government ask to nominate them?—not, surely, on that of a small pension, making them petty placemen under the Irish government! It could be no equivalent for the authority and income drawn from the people's love, which they actually enjoy. Not on restoration to rank! It is not offered to them; the station they now hold in society has been purchased by their virtues, their piety, and firmness. How can a government expect to nominate what it has endeavoured to destroy—to a situation that derives none of its lustre, emolument, or right from it? How can a Protestant government, denying temporalities and rank to Catholic bishops, come forward to ask the nomination of a body thus stripped?—thus unindebted to them for any advantage, and so long despised? Many English Catholic sovereigns nominated Irish bishops occasionally, not always; nor have Popes exercised this power very much. The Irish clergy, in ancient times, were independent men—far from mean subserviency to the Papal chair, or to English kings!

They desire not Italian or English favourites to exclude Irishmen from situations in their church.

In John's and Henry the Third's reign they resisted the attempts of kings and popes to introduce foreigners, or Englishmen, into Irish benefices and bishoprics. It was a fair pretension—a truly patriotic stand to make!

These clergy are still the same. Their bishops are enlightened upright characters, friends to monarchy—modestly, but properly sustaining their rank; and universally esteemed and venerated by the people!

The union seemed to have presented an opportunity to government for effecting some grand healing measure between them and the Catholic prelacy of Ireland. But, perhaps, the public mind was not sufficiently calm to have met it in a satisfactory way. The present bishops of the Irish Catholic church are very high-minded men, and I do not think money would have any allurement whatever for them! Their wants are small, and sufficiently provided for to make them feel quite independent! They will come to any treaty with government, with minds at ease for their mere pecuniary concerns; but anxious to have their independence and just rank recognized and established! No servile and blind adherence to the Pope binds them to the court of Rome; but the monarchical constitution of their

church requires them to look to him as spiritual head. The liberties of their church have been always dear to them, nor do they wish to be enslaved by the Crown or the Pope!

I do not write, my dear L., on any idle theories, as some eminent writers, whose talents have done the highest honours to themselves and the country, seemed to impute to me, on the occasion of a small publication of mine, some years ago, in favour of the Catholic bishops of Ireland; but from conviction, and observation, that a constitutional balance will be best obtained by leaving them their just independence!

There are four millions of Catholics, at least, in Ireland; and this body forms a most important member of the state. I have seen and known many of their bishops, and found them highly deserving the protection of the British government. It is too liberal, too wise, and too enlightened, not to regret the imperious and unjust severity of Elizabeth's ministry, which consigned the body to which they belong—to utter degradation.

Scotland has been permitted to have her own church, differing more from the Protestant one than the Catholic one of Ireland! It is time to do a wise and just deed here, in allowing the Irish Catholics reasonable liberty and independence for their's. The union draws away great part of the men of fortune and talents to

England; and the field for future demagogues, or foreign invaders, has become more open in that respect.

The Protestant church in Ireland, however respectable, cannot command the affections of, or expect to influence the Catholic population. Cast your eyes on the map of Ireland! Figure to yourself this great population we have, in several walks, been compelled so much to notice. Take from them those bishops and clergy, whom we have seen so meritoriously and laboriously employed in affording religious rights, in inculcating morals and loyalty, and in furthering education everywhere among them! Take from them—(or totally degrade in their eyes, which is the same)—those moral and religious guardians, and the statesman instantly opens the doors to fanaticism, immorality, or irreligion,—to the foreign invader and domestic incendiary! The Catholic prelates preserve order and religion in the population more than any other means could! Their religion suits the character and temperament of the Irish, and both strike their senses, and have a strong hold on their understandings! Their clergy's activity and zeal keep religion alive among their flocks!

In the worst times of Charles the First, fanaticism, the grand enemy to monarchy in England, made little progress in Ireland. The Catholic prelates were then trifled with by Charles the

First and Second—I might say deceived;—they were led astray, for a few years, by the dangerous Rinuncini—and deluded, for a moment, by the republican leaders of England. Such times cannot recur! The Stuarts no more exist to distract an empire; they could not rightly rule. The influence and power of the Papal court, in Europe, have faded not to revive! And no fanatic and artful republican English general can delude the Irish mind for the destruction of the constitution!

Above all, my dear L., there are not such prelates of the Catholic church as Rinuncini drove into a wrong path, when Charles's crown was seized by republicans, and confusion reigned everywhere; nor have these prelates the wrongs to complain of which Elizabeth and the First James inflicted!

If you had made such walks or progress through Ireland as we have done, (and are now concluding,) you would find them polite and hospitable gentlemen, good scholars, acute and powerful reasoners, friends to monarchy and to the English constitution, enemies to petty despotism, as in the times of Henry the Second, and decidedly for one grand executive government regulating the whole empire—utterly adverse to foreign influence, and full of respect and gratitude to his present Majesty!

It is striking to me, having commenced the

study of the reign of Henry the Second, in the county of Wexford, in 1812, and then observed the favourable conduct of the Irish prelates to that monarch—to have since remarked so many of this venerable body attached to the English crown, laws, and constitution! Henry favoured and consulted the clergy of former days! The merit of those of modern times is, indeed, peculiar, and, perhaps, unrivalled in Europe. It is the triumph of reason and religion, under trying circumstances. It is surely desirable, that they should have rank and weight in the midst of a great population, to prevent it becoming quite democratical in religion. The Protestant church in England herself, is threatened with the danger of her population deserting episcopacy.

The present minister, whom I sincerely respect, has said, in the House of Lords, that he could not avoid thinking, that, in every interference of the Pope, there must be something "temporal." Do not their oaths of allegiance, taken by Catholic bishops, rebut this? Do not the statutes of premunire exist? Does not the mighty power of the English executive make the objection a weak one? Yet the candour and integrity of that noble character leaves no doubt but that he may apprehend something from papal interference. The Irish Catholic prelates ought, in every possible and proper manner, to endeavour to satisfy the minister's doubts.

Lord Liverpool may turn to the pages of Irish and English history, and perceive that Henry the Second, or Seventh, or even the Protestant government, under Edward the Sixth, did not fear the Papal confirmation of the Irish Catholic bishops. The latter case is a strong one, applies to the present day, and on that I shall endeavour to ground my answer to your question. In fact, the Irish Catholic church has always, from its establishment in the island, followed a very primitive course, and elected its own bishops. The recurrence to the Pope was caused by confusion and petty despotism at Rome, and by conceiving a spiritual head would promote order in the Irish church in a more efficacious way!

In the case of King John and Eugene, how very respectable is the conduct of the Irish prelate!—how patriotic!—yet, how rightly respectful to the English crown! How independent of the Pope do the Irish clergy appear in the reign of Henry the Third, when they turned his Italian ecclesiastics away with disdain, and repelled his own exactions! To Edward the Third they shewed true loyalty, mixed with a just sense of their liberties. In the reign of Henry the Seventh they very materially contributed to keep the crown on the head of one of England's wisest kings, and, in some measure, the founder of her present excellent constitution! The most vio-

lent emissary of the Pope, in Queen Elizabeth's time, was an English ecclesiastic. In that of Charles, an Italian one. The temporal power of the Pope, in Ireland, was never more than an excrescence growing out of England's injustice and persecution! These have long ceased; so has the effect.

Lord Liverpool cannot fear the temporal power of the Pope, when there are no temporalities; and when a strong and most respectable Protestant body on the spot could easily detect the least exercise of such power! A spiritual head regulates the Irish Catholic church in a monarchical way, which suits the character of their religion. As the noble Lord is the head of a cabinet, and regulates, but is not despotic over the body—so the Pope imparts order, and prevents discord in the Irish Catholic church. If there be no other head of religion in the empire to fear but the Pope, the minister has little to apprehend. The difficulty on the side of the Irish Catholic prelates is, that they should acknowledge a Protestant head in spiritual matters as well as civil. The thing is impossible for Catholics.

Although in England the union of church and crown has hitherto appeared beneficial, it may be doubted whether a wholesome spirit of religion is not best kept alive by a church reasonably independent, and moderately *endowed*.

Such is the position, at least, which appears, to my understanding, the most suited for the Irish Catholic church: by "endowed," I mean decently provided for. A respectable church should not be left depending too much on the will or caprice of the multitude.

I think, my dear L., that glebe-lands, suppose we say fifty acres for each Catholic bishop, and a respectable mansion,—thirty for his dean,—and twenty for each priest in his diocese, —should be granted by parliament, giving the possessors a freehold in the same; that the election of a bishop of the Catholic church in chapters, or by suffragans, should be certified, as a mark of respect to the government, at Dublin; as also to the Pope for confirmation; and that the new Catholic bishop should, in the term succeeding his appointment, take, in the Court of King's Bench, a full and explicit oath of allegiance, explanatory—that the Pope's interference in spiritual regulations had nothing prejudicial to the royal authority and laws of England, and had nothing of a temporal nature in it, nor that said bishop would not suffer such temporal interference in the Pope! All laws injurious to the Catholic clergy, peculiarly, should be at once repealed. The rank of the Catholic bishops should be openly allowed;—a small compensation for above two centuries of poverty, danger, and unmerited disgrace!

This simple plan gives no splendid temporalities,—does not encroach on the respectable Protestant church of Ireland,—gives the Pope no great power,—might satisfy any government, as to loyalty,—and would spread a healing balm over this island.

I do not think the generous and liberal Protestants of Ireland would be averse to it! It is founded, in some measure, on the first contract of Henry the Second, on the noble charter of Henry the Third, on the plan of Henry the Seventh, and on the precedents of the close of Henry the Eighth's reign, and of the short one of the young Edward the Sixth; when a Protestant government in England, of the strictest nature, thought it wise and right to give the Catholic church just protection, and favourable countenance!

I have written all this, my dear L., under very solemn feelings. The perpetual dangers, which the empire incurred in Ireland since the hasty and ill-considered decision of Elizabeth, are present to my view! The conviction that, in 1798, the exemplary loyalty of the Catholic clergy, and of that people at large, alone saved Ireland from falling under revolutionary France, is strong in my mind! Their conduct, during the whole late French war, when, even to the hour of the usurper's expedition to Russia in 1812, there was more danger than the Irish go-

vernment is yet, perhaps, fully aware of, deserves the admiration and rewards of the empire! When just Catholic liberty shall be bestowed on all the body, (and that of their church is a grand preliminary,) then shall I feel this great empire secure, whatever foreign war arise—then shall I think the plan of Henry the Second perfected—and then, only, shall the English crown proudly defy external force and internal machinations! Believe me, &c. &c.

LETTER XXIV.

Killaloe, Banks of the Shannon, Oct. 24, 1817.

MY DEAR L.

We left Athenree exceedingly early, and had the good fortune to find a delightful path through the still verdant fields, which carried us half-way to Lough-rea. The sun glistened on the wet grass, and illumined the ruined buildings and walls of Athenree, as we left it far behind. Perhaps we walked over the silent spot where the war-like and unfortunate young King of Connaught lay; we delayed little; but, benefiting by the path and fineness of the morning, rapidly passed on, and reached Lough-rea to breakfast. This is a large town, of about five thousand inha-

bitants, and beautifully situated on a fine lake. I grieve very much to say, that fever raged in it.

We stayed one day, and were entertained with hospitality and kindness by several genteel families. I feel bound to say, that in no instance, among many which have come within our knowledge, have they neglected the cause of humanity and the sick poor, when things were properly laid before them. Government, I am sure, will assist this unfortunate town. The many afflicting cases we heard of would fill this letter, if I recited them. Sudden deaths,—some snatched in the bloom of life,—some in middle-age,—have filled Lough-rea with melancholy and alarm.

Staying one night, we left it very early the following morning. Twilight scarcely glimmered enough to let us discern the road; and the quantities of water-fowl on the shore of the lake, as we passed, rising, with sudden noise and confusion, seemed to reproach us for so prematurely coming abroad. They were afraid of no Insurrection-bill, but springing up before sun-rise, scattered themselves over the adjoining country. As we walked on, the morning gradually dawned, and the smiling face of a fine agricultural country opened before us.

Ascending a hill, some miles from Lough-rea, we had a noble prospect. Our plan had been at first to go to Portumna; but we resolved to take the opportunity of calling at Marble-hill, the

seat of Sir John Burke. This is an exceedingly fine place, situated amongst noble woods, and commanding extensive prospects. Sir John and Lady Burke, and some very amiable relations, received us with much politeness, and entered into all the spirit of our tour.

It is impossible, my dear L., until I see you, to do full justice to the hospitality and polished manners of the gentlemen of Connaught and their families. At Marble-hill we spent two most pleasing days. Within two or three miles of it, we visited a remarkable spot. It is a kind of labyrinth, or rural improvement, made with a great deal of taste, adorned with some fine old trees, and planted with young ones. A delightful spring has been formed into two wells, arched with old stones, in the grotto style. Some ponds enclose one side of this place, prettily shaped. Various walks and seats are curiously designed and made in every part, and a small stone tomb, yet empty, and with inscriptions of a melancholy and religious nature, is in the centre of this tasteful and romantic little improvement, whose space is not more than a quarter of an acre. Venerable ash-trees overshadow it. All this is the work of a maniac! It affords a singular instance of the power of melancholy madness.

The author of this extraordinary and really beautiful work, is a farmer's son, whose family reside near Marble-hill. From some difference

with part of his family, he became suddenly deranged, and betook himself to forming this rural labyrinth, and his own burial-place. For several years he worked indefatigably at it,—chiefly in summer; and as he had some small property, employed labourers to assist him. The spot of ground he had from a neighbouring gentleman, and was probably attracted to it by the clear spring, and old ash-trees. His madness was very inoffensive, and to this solitude he devoted most of his time. He placed trout, and other fish, in his ponds and wells, which became familiar, and came to him to be fed.

This maniac has the last year or two become much better; but he still frequents his favourite haunt, and its improvements do honour to his taste. From the inscriptions, I think religious melancholy must have preyed on him a long time; and, if so, I can never sufficiently pity him. It is the most dreadful and deplorable of all maladies!

Favoured by Sir John Burke's protecting care, we visited the castle of Portumna on the following day. The Countess of Clanrickarde, his sister, a lady, whose virtues claim universal respect, was, unfortunately for us, not at home. The castle is very grand, and highly interesting. The great hall, stair-case, and the state drawing-room, are very handsome; and a long room, in the highest story, is calculated for a fine library.

It is in an unfinished state. There is an exceedingly fine prospect from the leads of the castle. The Shannon spreads into a great body of water, as it passes beneath, and the country is seen to a vast extent in every direction. There are several family-pictures, and a great deal of ancient furniture, which give a venerable air to many of the rooms. The castle stands in the midst of woods, and the village of Portumna adjoins it.

From the time of Elizabeth, the De Burghs' family became peaceable and faithful subjects to the crown, which they had often defied; and Sir William De Burghs, having very meritoriously damped an invasion, led on by one of the house of Desmond, received much approbation, and a title from Elizabeth. When Lord Stafford acted so tyrannically in Galway, even in Portumna-castle, the Earl of Clanrickarde resided in England, and was esteemed and beloved by all. Vexation is said to have shortened his days. His successor, the Marquis of Clanrickarde, was one of the most exalted characters of his time. The family remained Catholic, but their sentiments of loyalty to the English government were of the purest kind. Lord Clanrickarde made every effort a good subject could and ought, in the reign of Charles the First, to assist the sovereign, and to restrain violence in Ireland; but the despotism of Charles was too inveterate to allow

itself to be assisted; and the turbulent passions of the Irish, inflamed by the furious and bigotted Rinuncini, were too high to permit this excellent nobleman to have his just weight among them.

The Marquis of Clanrickarde, however, never swerved from the best-principled conduct; never submitted, as Ormond did, to the parliament and fanatic leaders; and untainted by the prejudice against Catholics, which narrowed Lord Ormond's mind, he laboured strongly to save them from the effects of their own imprudence, and to secure to them, in good time, advantageous terms.

Lord Clanrickarde refused a high command from the confederate Catholics, when they first concentrated their power in Charles the First's reign, because he would not stoop to be the instrument of their passions. He was their friend, but disdained to be the tool and football of their party. He finally accepted the office of lord-deputy; and, though disapproving of the monarch's conduct in many things, he endeavoured to the last to struggle for the English crown, and to hold Connaught in obedience to it. For these services, I believe, he never experienced any royal gratitude; or, at least, was only suffered by Charles the Second, who received every service, and rewarded none, to live at Portumna-castle in dignified retirement.

How difficult was it, my dear L., in such times

in Ireland, to pursue the rare line of conduct followed by the Marquis of Clanrickarde! To sustain, with proud fortitude, his name, honour, and principles, he opposed the fury of the Catholic party, which he saw led to the discomfiture of all their just hopes! He could not but displease the fanatic party, to whom himself, as a Catholic, and zealous friend to the crown, was obnoxious. He had the misfortune to serve two monarchs incapable of valuing so worthy a subject, and who were but too easily disposed to abandon, to all the fury of party, their most faithful adherents. What remained for so dignified a character, but tranquil retirement in Portumna-castle, when he had in the hour of danger done all that a subject and citizen ought to do? If, however, he had experienced the persecution of parties, and the ungrateful neglect of kings, he had done his part to the empire, and he had conscious rectitude to bless the evening of his days!

How different has been the conduct of his present revered majesty, George the Third, to that of Charles the Second! Through his majesty's long and glorious career, what firmness,—what sincerity has he not displayed! Above all, he never abandoned a friend! Literature has been encouraged by him,—faithful service rewarded; and the love and respect of friends and subjects attend him in the evening of life! Had the Marquis of Clanrickarde served such a monarch, he would have

promoted the advantage of his throne, and the lasting welfare of Ireland; he would have been cherished and rewarded as his friend!

Portumna-castle, as the residence of so great and good a man, filled us with sentiments of melancholy respect. Clanrickarde seemed to walk in its shades, musing on the follies of man,—reflecting on the past, and preparing for a nobler scene! The ancient hall, the stair-case, and noble rooms, were full of his presence! It added to my feelings, that an only and beloved brother had served under General De Burghs, the last possessor, and fallen in the cause of his country in a distant land!

We crossed the Shannon into Tipperary, to see a Mr. Monsell's beautiful house on its opposite banks. Sir John Burke had given us an introduction, and we were greatly gratified by his reception, and by seeing one of the most charming spots on this noble river. Mr. Monsell farms extremely well, and has excellent gardens. He shewed us several fine views of the Shannon from different parts of his grounds, and fully understood the picturesque beauty of his place. Mingling agriculture, gardening, the delightful converse of books, and the society of friendship, this gentleman, in the bosom of a happy and amiable family, afforded the pleasing spectacle of rural life, well and most usefully enjoyed. On the banks of the Shannon, his charming villa

commanded the most pleasing prospect, and sat in the midst of rural elegance near its smooth and majestic stream. On the opposite side, Portumna-castle rose above its woods, and recalled to mind the history of other times.

Mr. Monsell shewed us some good experiments in farming, and one in particular deserving notice, where he had reclaimed a great deal of red bog (in a dry season), which now produced corn and potatoes. This place had formerly belonged to Lord Avonmore, a name dear to law and literature.

Mr. Monsell's conversation was enlightened and instructive. Hospitality and politeness made time pass quickly at his mansion; and, though Mrs. Monsell's absence made us lose the strains of the harp, which stood in one of the rooms, yet Mr. M. made our day most pleasing, and sending his own boat with us to the Portumna-side, this gentleman omitted nothing to make the close of our excursion as agreeable as possible. At a late hour we returned to Marble-hill to dinner, and the following morning left its hospitable roof to renew the toils of the pedestrian.

The morning was cold, and threatened rain, but we had no time to lose, and hastily pursued our way. Our walk to this town was not interesting. We heard of dreadful ravage by fever on the way, and of entire hamlets infected by it. A mountainous district, called Feikle, between Galway

and Clare, was said to labour dreadfully under this malady. From Portumna to Banagher, in the King's county,—from thence to Roscommon, and again downwards to Limerick, and on both sides the Shannon, the awful pestilence is spreading! As we walk, death stalks around us, climbs the wild mountain-side, and desolates the plain! The humble cottage is everywhere assailed by him; and the proud mansions of the great no longer escape. The professions most exposed are the pious ecclesiastic, and skilful physician, who fall daily beneath his stroke! In these, and many similar situations, we never feel one moment safe, but rely on Providence and quietly proceed!

Can an individual think of self, when a whole island presents before him so afflicting a scene? Shall not a benevolent government take precautions against present and future horrors? How often does history shew us Ireland afflicted in the same way? And is not the misery of her people the grand exciting cause of fever? We left Marble-hill with some concern, lest its very worthy and enlightened possessor should suffer from this general pestilence, as he had complained of illness, and was confined to his bed.

In short, my dear L., it has been difficult to avert melancholy, and pursue this walk with the same cheerfulness and vigour as former ones. I am far from holding gloomy and presumptuous ideas, which lead men to pronounce that the

universal calamity which pervades Ireland this season, is the work of an angry Deity. I see, plainly, that we have no occasion to impute vengeance to the exalted Creator of those smiling scenes of natural beauty at this moment bursting on the view, and whose benevolence has provided every thing for the happiness of man; the wretchedness of this community, through whom we have wandered so much, may well be traced to definite causes on earth, without making Heaven a party to it.

I have the sweet hope that our ministers may lend their serious attention to the several letters I have troubled them with, pourtraying the unexampled miseries we have witnessed. I have hope that they may go farther, and probe with undaunted hand the fundamental grievances of centuries, which have oft times ended in famine and pestilence! I have placed before their eyes, in as strong a view as possible, the sorrows of this afflicted and depressed people! I have painted, without aggravation, but with the pencil of truth, mournful and appalling scenes, which the pedestrian alone could explore, and which no government could fully know. They have not neglected my representations; but, in one letter, the medical board of Dublin, appointed by the secretary and lord-lieutenant, rely upon a plentiful harvest as likely to remove pestilence!

Alas! my dear L., great as are the bounties of

Heaven, they cannot remedy the long-standing errors of man, and their heart-rending consequences! I have laid before the British minister himself the unhappy state of Ireland from present suffering, and my fears that money bestowed on public works might aggravate disorder, and not much relieve the people. I have drawn his attention, as well as the Irish secretary's, to the want of towns, hospitals, and dispensaries, in remote parts of Ireland, which increases public wretchedness, and manifests a long disregard, in various succeeding ministries, to the people of this noble and valuable island. Pestilence and foreign invasion form the two great tests of a well-governed population. If they spread and succeed in inflaming the mass, I should say,—"there has been great unhappiness here, and of old standing." The material is easily lighted up which has been allowed to ferment for centuries, and the conflagration often consumes those who have too inertly looked on. If I could indulge the expectation that the attention of government may be aroused by the testimony of an eye-witness beholding this nation writhing under pestilence, poverty, and famine, I should feel happy. Life is short, and the idea of the perpetuation of so many horrors is too dreadful to bear without one great effort to prevent it.

The Irish secretary has already done more to ameliorate the condition of this island than a

long list of predecessors. Much yet remains; and I, among others, sincerely wish he may continue to preside here till much more be achieved. No party-feeling has presided in my breast. I have neither wished to manifest acrimony against, nor servility to, ministers. It is their duty to attend minutely to this unhappy and long-suffering island, and provide a powerful remedy instead of a temporizing palliative. The volumes of history, and the mournful scenes of this day, ought not to speak in vain. If they neglect the noble opportunity which peace affords, their names will go down, as those of innumerable governors of Ireland, marked by the stigma of unjustly, impoliticly, and cruelly neglecting the fairest portion of the empire, and of leaving the pledges, charters, and treaties of English monarchs unfulfilled! The general welfare of the community alone has influenced me in the representations I have made. It is time to do some great act of benevolence and justice to Ireland. Her present misery is a cogent argument that a bad system has reigned too long, and that no feeble palliatives can remove mighty and overwhelming causes of evils. In the existing pestilence, I trace an effect. In many other grievances, I observe others. But causes cannot be remedied by removing effects. A distinguished and learned Protestant prelate, now no more, said to me one day in his palace,—"Our people are lazy and

filthy, and dislike every species of industry." His lordship pronounced on the effect, but mounted not up to the cause. A nation kept in a state of vassalage, can never have the vigorous independence or the virtues of industry. Its idleness and vices are fruits of its system, not its nature, in this country; for well does the Bard of Greece sing with immortal truth,—

"Slavery takes away half man's virtues."

On our way here, we passed through the small villages of Woodfort, Mount Shannon, and Shariff; and repaired to the house of the Rev. Mr. Martin, rector of a small parish in these remote parts. He received us with great kindness and true hospitality, and invited us to breakfast, at which his amiable lady gave us excellent tea and cakes. To pedestrians, having walked many miles in a cold uncomfortable morning, this was a circumstance too agreeable to pass over. Mr. Martin, sensible, well-informed, and educated, is placed here on a very small living; I believe, not much exceeding £100 per annum. Surely, this kind of thing is injurious and disgraceful to the Protestant church in Ireland. Ought not the very large livings to afford something to such scanty provision for a gentleman and scholar of fine feelings and talent, spending his life in a sequestered scene, and unable to perform all the offices of hospitality and charity he would wish?

The Protestant clergy in Ireland do a great deal of good. They blend and harmonize things into social and animated union, and spread education, talents, and learning through this island. Their tithes make them rationally independent, and are deducted from landlords more than tenants. Their glebe is their freehold; and they help to form a counterpoise to a great and powerful aristocracy. But I should rejoice to see no living so low as Mr. Martin's, and think £300 per annum quite little enough for any Protestant rector or vicar; and the provision of £100 not more than sufficient for all curates in the Protestant church. To many excellent men of it we are indebted in our walks for hospitality, when we called on them. You, my dear L., I hope, may agree with me in these sentiments. However, I write not to you as of any profession, but as an English gentleman of enlarged mind, finished education, and favourably disposed towards Ireland.

Within some miles of this, the views of the Shannon grew magnificently fine. We seemed to walk along the side of a long-spreading lake, rather than of a river. Lough-dring is, indeed, to be considered as such, with the Shannon flowing into it. An island, with some ruins, and a venerable round tower, offered itself to our view in one part, as we walked along. In another, wooded hills, or small mountains, formed amphi-

theatres round the circling bays of this noble body of water. The eye dwelt on it with surprize and delight, and the Shannon, so much admired by us at Limerick and its environs, as well as near Portumna-castle, seemed now to surpass itself,—to expand, and assume grander beauties,—to delight in mountain-scenery, and run into creeks and inlets, whilst his waves, agitated by winds, which had arisen since early morning, dashing and foaming on the shores, almost confirmed the illusion that the sea itself was before us! We saw several beautiful places contributing to adorn these romantic and wonderfully fine scenes; but the general appearance of the country bespeaks poverty. Few smiling cottages or good farm-houses enriched them. Nature had done every thing,—man little,—to make them all the eye could desire. Scenes, which are not excelled by those of Wales or Switzerland, here sadden the mind, when it reflects on the destitute situation of the poor mountain-cottager, and cannot repress a sigh in the midst of all their beauty.

The rain began to pour in torrents on us, as we got near Killaloe. The mountains were overcast with dark mists, and the river looked gloomy as the storm swept over its surface. As we proposed reaching this last night, we continued our way, heavily drenched with rain, and almost petrified with cold. But we considered our labours

drawing to a close, and bore our inevitable inconvenience and suffering patiently. Is it not well, my dear L., to experience, from time to time, what the people have to endure? When they go to market, or to chapel, or to church, must they not often shiver under the storm, and drop with rain? When business compels them, —when the sickness of friends call them abroad in the worst weather, they must endure all that weather can inflict! Feeble age may bend beneath it, and tender youth shrink under its severity. It is good, surely, my dear L., to know what our fellow-creatures suffer on such occasions; and if we recollect how badly they are often clad in Ireland, even a tear may start! We arrived late in the evening at Killaloe.

Believe me, yours, &c.

LETTER XXV.

Killarney, Nov. 14, 1817.

MY DEAR L.

We arrived some time ago in Cork, and having resolved to conclude our tour at Killarney, we have arrived at it. Yesterday evening we were tempted to go out; and through the misty atmosphere of this dull weather, obtained our first view of the Lakes of Killarney. They have

not gratified all our expectations. The sublime scenery of the west of Ireland is still too recent in our minds to permit us to look with any degree of surprize on that of Killarney. The weather and season are unfavourable. The lower lake is certainly a fine body of water, but not superior to Lough Mask, on which Lord Tyrawley's cottage is situated, and falls far short of Lough Corrib, near which is placed the Abbey of Cong.

We set out with the intention of calling at Mr. Herbert's on our way, and of then proceeding to the beautiful demesne of Mucruss. We found the worthy and amiable family at Carrickbane at home, and having paid our respects, proceeded. But we had scarcely entered Mucruss demesne, when rain began to fall. We persisted, however, in walking through the charming grounds of Mucruss, and viewing, in their winter-dress, these romantic scenes. At length, we beheld the Turk-mountain, raising his wooded summit and sides to the dark clouds. A foaming cascade hurried from adjoining mountains, and precipitated itself into Mucruss-lake. The wild grandeur of scenes, too well known for me to describe, made us long pause. Summer was gone, and unclad and naked, this true sublime seized every faculty of the soul! The Deity seemed more awful in his works. The contour and shapes of the mighty features of this winter-land-

scape were plainer to the eye. There was silence too, and solitude,—companions of the sublime; and not a bird flitted across the way.

Mucruss Abbey is very ancient. The cloister is very perfect; and the great yew-tree, which you have read of, fills its enclosure in a remarkable manner. It forms a sort of canopy, well-suiting the place. It was dark, and rained when we entered it. The corridores of this cloister were damp and chilly; adjoining cells and passages were full of bones, coffins, and skeletons.

The heavy rain made a chopping, gurgling noise at short intervals, and otherwise no sound prevailed. This noise resembled the solemn and slow beating of a great pendulum. It seemed the voice of Eternity speaking to the globe, and warning one generation that another must soon take its place! The records of history mouldered beneath its breath, and all the varieties of men grew ridiculous in the mind's view! Princes, emperors, conquerors, statesmen, misers—all who endeavour to grasp most, and retain it longest, looked, in its glance, the children of the hour playing in sun-shine, and accumulating toys and flowers in the land or verdant field. Again, and again, the solemn repetition of this apalling sound recurred! Eternity itself opened to the soul; but, like space without beginning or end, involved it in painful obscurity! Time seemed a partial measure, and the life of man a moment

—a speck—scarcely allowing him opportunity to look around and reflect, when extinguished by death, the gloomy master of the spot where we stood. One grand truth brightened through this melancholy chaos, that to do good to fellow-man, is the only means to impart value to, and, as it were, extend this moment of existence. This is the only sure method to obtain the approbation of a great Deity; himself beneficent, and always encouraging his creatures to beneficence, by its pleasing results! From this way of stamping value on our hour of life, nothing should deter. Does ingratitude of the blackest kind return perfidy and ruin for all the kindest offices of generosity and protection? Let it be its own punishment! Heaven, or its own consciousness, will inflict enough. Mankind cannot be answerable for the faults of individuals. Let us go on in our course; and, undeterred by any ingratitude, calumny, or disappointment, give to our own existence that perfumed charm, whose fragrance revives the dying being, and hovers on his tomb, ere it ascends to heaven!

The monuments, the cloister, and the ruined walls of Mucruss Abbey, long detained us, as the dark shadowed mountains, and the cold blast of November, gave deeper horrors to the scene.

As we left Mucruss demesne the evening darkened. We had scarcely time to reach Killarney

to dinner. The Catholic Bishop of Killarney received us in the most pleasing manner, and entertained us very handsomely. Some select friends dined with him, and the evening passed away in rational and useful conversation. This very respectable prelate of the Catholic church saw Lord Harrowby lately here; and having waited on him, and, in a manly and perspicuous way, which is peculiarly his own, stated to and argued the case of the Irish Catholic bishops with him. That noble lord, I understand, received him with politeness and candour. Such a proceeding always pleases me in Catholics, as the more they come forward in this temperate and frank manner, the sooner may conviction reach the English mind. The more intercourse English ministers, or nobles, have with Irish Catholic bishops, I will venture to say, the more will their prejudices and fears give way. Talents and erudition distinguish this worthy prelate, and he is not at all singular among his brethren. To-morrow we go to the Upper Lake, to take another winter view of these sublime scenes! In another day I shall bid you farewell, &c. &c.

LETTER XXVI.

Killarney, Nov. 15, 1817.

MY DEAR L.

THE lower class of the people of Kerry seem to us of smaller stature, poorer, and less independent in mind than the mountaineers of the west. We are now in that district where the tyranny of kings, and of the Earls of Desmond, and the military law in Elizabeth's reign, has done the human race no service. We shall not be able to see much of this county, however.

Mr. Weld's elegant performance will give you more knowledge than I can offer you, at the conclusion of long and laborious peregrinations, and at this season of the year.

The population is great, and, I am told, amounts in this county to two hundred thousand, which calculation, applied to the whole island, will produce, at least, six millions. The truth cannot be disguised, and cannot be too often repeated, that this immense population is daily on the increase.

The ingenious and respectable Mr. Townsend properly remarks, in his excellent history of the county of Cork, that mere numbers should not be relied on in argument! It is very true; and, above all, not in a threatening way; but, on the

other hand, a vast population springing up in this island ought not to be disregarded. In our whole recent tour, of more than six hundred miles, through Munster and Connaught, from Cork to the extremity of Mayo; and from Erris to the centre of Kerry, the fact has presented itself to our eyes of an innumerable and increasing population! In Kerry they complain heavily of high rents. Their dreadful pressure, through Munster, Connaught, and Leinster, we have but too much ascertained. They appear in this county a mild and obliging people; are well-looking and intelligent, and inclined to be industrious. The linen manufacture is established a little among them, and of the coarsest kind. Market-towns, and encouragement for remote parts, are wanting.

Our walk to-day was a short but laborious one. As we ascended the hills above Mucruss, the view of the lower lakes of Killarney was extremely fine. Mucruss demesne and house, forming a peninsula of the most beautiful shape, and rich with evergreens, appeared just below! Its still verdant grounds, beautifully varying, were indented by the lakes on either side; and the ancient abbey, once the quiet seat of piety and learning, in this remote spot, towered among the dark trees! The great lake, hemmed in by mountains on one side, spread far in the view! Its wooded islands, Inisfallen, and others, spotted its placid

surface. The distant country to the right; the town of Killarney sending up its smoke as the day cleared up; various hamlets, and far cultivated lands, filled up the picture! Close beside us, Turk arose in wooded majesty, and the Mangeston mountains behind encompassed our way. A more enchanting scene I have never beheld; not to be surpassed, I am sure, in Italy, Switzerland, or any other country.

Travellers coming from Kenmare and Bantry meet this view. I recommend it as the best way of approaching Killarney; but the road is narrow, mountainous, and not passable for any heavy carriages. Either on horse-back or on foot it may be easily passed. On turning from this noble view, we proceeded through a wild and sublime mountain glen, formed by the Mangeston, Turk, and other mountains. A rapid river, swollen with the late rains, ran near us on the left, and foamed over the rocks in its bed. Not a cottage was to be seen: not a bird heard. Nature reigned in majestic silence through the mighty scene. Winter poured all his waters to increase the mountain torrents, and his moisture made the sides of the glen more verdant. Misty clouds floated near, and rested on the proud summits above, or spread and rolled along the intervening chasms. This wild way led us, at the distance of six miles, to an approach to the upper lake of Killarney. It is usual to reach it

by water. The weather had prevented us doing so. We crossed part of a mountain, and found it beneath. It is small, and encircled by chains of mountains in the most picturesque manner. From a high rock, whose lichen-covered side was perpendicular next the lake, we beheld it; its woods, cottages, and tributary rivers, resembling a clear reflecting mirror, placed directly under our eyes! A profusion of evergreens made the picture charming, and mountain-scenery loses but little by the absence of summer! In winter, lakes and rivers are fuller, and the clearness of the air often makes the outline of mountains more distinct and effective. Winter favours reflection, and we now calmly enjoyed Killarney—divested of a summer dress, and also of the gay crowds who often admire it in the fine season. These awful scenes of winter-picturesque strengthen and animate the mind. The difficulties attending their attainment are suitable to man, and invigorate him by exercise. Few have the wish to purchase winter pictures of the sublime, by fatigue and cold; but, when they do, they are amply recompenced. A river connects the upper and lower lake. A very humble cottage here afforded us potatoes and some water. Captain Herbert's politeness had supplied us with better provision, or we had less enjoyed the romantic scene. In this cottage poverty proclaimed her empire! The little arable land near it paid a very high

rent, and the peasant sighed in sorrow amidst the beauties of Killarney! The family were gathering their winter harvest of potatoes in a scanty field, stony, and barren-looking.

I doubt, my dear L., whether this boasted and prolific vegetable has been really advantageous to Ireland. Before Sir Walter Raleigh introduced it, they had better food. From their cattle they were supplied with milk and butter. Their flesh gave plentiful repast. Corn supplied bread. Honey formed a species of wine. Fish, fruit, and various vegetables, completed their supplies.

The population was less, because there was a smaller quantity of food, which is in fact its barometer. But they were better fed, less crowded, and, therefore, happier as to local advantages. This vegetable has spread with astonishing and rapid diffusion. The climate and soil suit it. Planted about two hundred years in Ireland, it has at least quintupled the population. But the best food of man—meat, corn, butter, &c. is almost all exported now, or only used by the better classes; the immense mass of the people has but miserable food; for daily meals of potatoes, morning and evening, often without milk, are sorry repasts; the increase of numbers, as Ireland is now situated, is really increase of wretchedness! I think, however, as neither potatoes nor men can be easily extirpated, that it is the

duty of government to manage this great family of the Irish nation as well as it can, under these circumstances. The generative principle can only be checked by want of food; and, as it abounds in Ireland, employment at home, and vent abroad—in other words—manufacture and emigration should be formed into two great channels for its vast and daily increasing superfluity!

On our return we crossed the mountains, and obtained a noble panorama of the whole lakes of Killarney and their connecting river. We could scarcely credit our senses that the whole celebrated lakes lay before us. To the right spread the Lower Lake; as a great expanse of the county of Kerry surrounded it, and we imagined we saw its outlet to the sea, and the winding river conveying its waters there, its many islands faintly appeared, and its blue waters seemed blending with the flattened shores;—to the left the Upper Lake, embosomed and sunk amongst mountains, and now distant from us! The connecting stream winded through the romantic glen close to us, wandering and varying as it ran, amongst scenes of exquisite local and retired beauty!

Here then, my dear L., on this spot, is the consummation and end of our labours! This comprehensive landscape exceeds our wishes. From this eminence, not only the wonderful beauties of Killarney, but this southern and romantic

extremity of Ireland, appears to meet our view! The various bays and great inlets of the sea approximate to us! From its domestic scenes we naturally extend our thoughts, in such a situation, to external ones!

Kerry presents many facilities to the invader, and has often witnessed his fleets or his presence! At Bantry, the providence of God and the mistakes of the enemy saved us. The conduct of the Earl of Bantry, and some other gentlemen of the county of Cork, was exemplarily good on this occasion. The government and military departments were so ill prepared, that, it is said, the cannon-balls would not fit the artillery hastily brought to Bantry Bay. The chief resistance, if the French had landed, would have been from Lord Bantry's tenantry, I am informed!—an evident proof how such an island as Ireland can be best defended at all points.

In another letter I shall draw your attention to some thoughts which crowded on my mind in this very interesting spot. Shall then bid you farewell, and release you from the pains of reading long letters, recounting the humble wanderings of pedestrians in this neglected island.

We had just time to arrive to a late dinner at Mr. Herbert's, of Carrickbane. He was not himself at home, but Captain Herbert, of the navy, and his brother, allowed us to feel no want of hospitality. Mr. Herbert's amiable and lovely

daughters gave it additional charms, and some very pleasing society, who joined the dinner-party, completed the enjoyment of one of the pleasantest and most rational evenings we spent on our tour. I am truly yours, &c. &c.

LETTER XXVII.

Carrickbane, (Killarney,) Nov. 15, 1817.

MY DEAR L.

'THE golden sun has just risen, and cast over the lakes his delightful radiance! All nature enjoys the cheering light, and the opposite mountains look, as in summer, lightly shadowing the serene bosom of the waters, and glowing in various parts with morning's rays! Ross Castle, on its peninsula, brightens as they touch it, and Innisfallen crowns the lake! This is an exceedingly pretty place of Mr. Herbert's, on the lake; the house is small, but elegantly rural; and the lawns, evergreens, and masses of rock, which strike the eye, with abundance of the purest picturesque, make the place a fairy scene, even in winter. From this hospitable roof I date my last letters! Beneath it every charm of society has combined to give the end of our extensive walks the air of a pleasant excursion happily terminated! Could

I think that this auspicious sun-rising, which has offered the lakes of Killarney to my delighted eyes from these windows, dressed in the glow of a June morning, betokened a happier dawn for Ireland, and that thus her wintry storms, and rains, and sufferings, were to end in serene, long-wished happiness!—my pen would tremble with joy, and the gentle hope of feebly contributing to her relief, throw a charm round the close of this tour surpassing description!

In taking a retrospect, for a few moments, of all we have observed in Ireland these five years, dating from the first walk to Bag and Bun until now, a painful impression remains!

You have encouraged me to publish these letters, and truth must guide me in my concluding, as well as preceding reflections!

Indifferent agriculture among the people at large, little manufacture, and excessive population agitated to madness, or sunk in despondency—the most generous virtues, mixed with faults—too great admiration of wealth—too much love of power, instead of independence;—in one word, want of sufficient and thorough cultivation of the intellect, by education and study—abundance of natural genius withering in sequestered scenes—the purest patriotism, devoid of malignity or ambition—real piety—too much vanity and pride, increased, however, by a sense of oppression—much petty despotism still remaining;

—two great churches, the established and the Catholic, not sufficiently harmonized,—the latter trifled with, rather than properly treated by England;—dissenters, of several sects, extremely respectable, industrious, and enlightened;—a government too distant to observe every thing, and too dependent on the representations of others;—invincible courage in the people;—the tender regards of love, and the virtuous affection of faithful females, brightening the gloom of oppression;—all this have we observed in Ireland! A Deity has showered down his bounties on her, but a bad system has paralyzed her powers, and turned many of her virtues into vices. Her wounded sensibilities have re-acted against herself, and against England!

In Flanders I have seen a picture totally different. England herself, under kings and chieftains,—under Roman tyranny, and Saxon heptarchy, presents an unpleasing exhibition. What is the plain inference to be drawn from the observations we have made? Is it not that Ireland has never had a good constitution, and still wants it! Nearly seventy years of an union has produced nothing. Five years ago, my dear L., when I employed myself in undertaking a defence of the chief magistrate, the present Prince-Regent, and, at the same time presumed, with sincere good wishes, to advise the great body of this nation, we were at war: I thought time should

be allowed by the public for great measures for Ireland to be brought forward by government. Complete and universal peace has reigned above two years! The most painful part of my retrospect is,—to consider, and to acknowledge, that my own hopes for Ireland are frustrated, and that I cannot offer the extenuation for delay in redressing her grievances in peace, which I did in war!

On a very affecting occasion, when the malady of our revered sovereign, in 1788, threatened a suspension of his functions, the Irish people unanimously paid the most grateful homage to the virtues of the heir-apparent, in trusting him with their destinies without any restriction! It was no party-question. Men on all sides decided for that generous act. That illustrious prince holds the sceptre now. He well knows that I would not pronounce one opinion disadvantageous to the throne of England! I have incurred the displeasure—I had almost said vengeance—of parties, for advocating its safety and independence, when the destroyer of nations yet ruled. I now, with equal zeal, cannot hesitate to declare that the best way to secure the crown of England for a long line of royal successors, is, to ameliorate the condition of Ireland so effectually, that all may enjoy the British laws, and local despotism be made for ever to disappear.

The half-accomplished work of Henry the Second yet upbraids his successors! The charter of Henry the Third is still pledged to give the Irish equal laws and liberties! The hand of the immortal William is scarcely mouldered away, which promised them these privileges in the treaty of Limerick! If the French had friends in Ireland, during the late war (and authorities on all sides have said so), it is wise to prevent greater, and similar future danger! The Prince-Regent, in reflecting on the admiration of the usurper of France, in any portion of his Irish subjects, may say to his English council, in the words of Galba, —"*Nero, apessimo quoque semper desiderabitur; —mihi, et tibi providendum est, ne etiam a bonis desiderabitur!*" Other foreign tyrants may arise.

I shall have performed a second great duty, in taking pains to lay before his Royal Highness a state of wretchedness in Ireland which is appalling to think of; and in now awakening all his attention to the state of an island which must prove the bulwark or the bane of his empire. His Royal Highness can never behold what I have seen; but I have endeavoured to present the misery of millions, and facts, observed by a pedestrian, to his view! I have laboured to revive the past in historic sketches, in order to dispel prejudice, to instruct all sides, and thus extract good from past misfortune or mistake. I have given delineations

of the actual situation of Ireland, taken from nature, and not exaggerated; not for gratifying party,—neither for applause nor emolument.

You, my dear L., have read my letters with indulgence, and your approbation will ever be valued by me. I shall call on you to-morrow to travel with me through my last. Let us then place the maps of Europe, and of the other quarters of the globe, before us. We have observed history; let us now look to the future. The Atlantic ocean rolls on every side of this southern promontory, and almost compels the subject, before I close my observations on Ireland.

LETTER XXVIII.

Killarney, Nov. 16, 1817.

MY DEAR L.

I CALL you to your promised task. I shall now give you some of the thoughts which occurred to me at the lake. It must be matter for serious contemplation, what the future fate of this fine island may be, in relation to other parts of Europe. History gives an heart-rending picture of what it has been, and teaches how long it has existed without flourishing as it ought. Its in-

sular position and nature make its government extremely difficult for England, unless, by studying the character of its inhabitants, the most suitable laws and constitution be given it which the case requires. To throw some light on that character has been part of my object in the letters I have addressed to you. It is quite vain to think the Irish character can be totally assimilated to that of the English. The former requires even milder laws than the latter; and a grand mistake has been made in giving Ireland the reverse. An island cannot be governed exactly in the same way as any adjoining part of an empire. Thus, Jamaica is allowed considerable latitude in governing herself; and her customs, manners, and character, are favoured by her own laws.

Distant provinces, such as Canada (and formerly North America), and Hindostan, call for, and claim the same indulgence. The insular state, or extreme distance, preserves a distinction of character between the main body and members of an empire. Rational liberty, or vassalage, are the two principles for governing the island or distant province, which the parent-government may choose. Ireland, down to the reign of his present majesty, and South America, to this moment, under Spain, shew the effects of the latter; —the former is the true principle. But we want it well expanded, and applied really, not imperfectly, here. To secure us from all danger from

foreigners, the country must be made entirely happy. Storms must ever make the external defence of islands by a parent-country uncertain. The excess of population in Ireland, is an increasing cause of danger; it is always generating discontent, and attracting invasion! The want of just rights and liberties, is another great co-operating cause of dissatisfaction. The one and the other are pregnant with local and political misery. If they are left to act on Ireland, what consequences may not ensue?

If the United States of America become a great maritime power, and be hereafter at war with England, how many expeditions may cross the Atlantic, bringing arms and supplies? Men will not be wanting in Ireland. Transports not necessary; and information of such expeditions may tardily arrive in England. The Spanish armada did not conquer England, but was nearly the means of liberating Ireland.

In Edward the Second's time, if the warlike young king of Connaught had been less precipitate, and Bruce more prudent, the English power had fallen. In Henry the Sixth's time, the Duke of York might have secured Ireland for his family, had he not had higher views. In that of the first Charles, a man of military and political genius might have easily caused the country to throw off the yoke of England. If James the Second had been any thing but a pusillanimous

tyrant, Ireland was lost to the parent-country! In 1798, Lord Edward Fitzgerald nearly emancipated her.

In 1811, I am well informed, a person acquainted with this island and her resources, in talents, natural advantages, and great population, contrived to wait on the late emperor of France, at Meudon, near Paris. He presented a petition from a friend (imprisoned for some frivolous cause, by the police), and contrived to insert in it his own name, with some strong hints regarding Ireland. The wary conqueror, then meditating the degradation of Russia, and the subjugation of all sovereigns, received the person with coolness, never read the paper, or conversed with him; but asking him a slight question, said rudely,—"*Meles vous de vos affaires,*" and dismissed him. A conversation might have arisen, and steps might have been then taken, fatal to England.

But the state of the Continent promises not repose. It will be difficult for France to be contented with a king and his family, imposed by the military force of foreigners! Had other measures followed Waterloo,—had a convocation from the great interests of France been assembled at Paris,—and had France been left to choose some other branch of her royal family, as England did in 1688, or to form her monarchy as she pleased, better things might be hoped. The

future is the more dangerous for Ireland. Whether such opinion as to France be erroneous or not, the present is the golden moment to seize, to avert, or render impracticable all future invasions and civil war!

The immortal William well understood of how much importance the thorough settlement of Ireland was to England. He came, not the oppressor of her religion and liberties, but to protect them. To make England strong against foreign despotism, he wished Ireland to be pacified, redressed, and happy. His foresight was just. May England now use it.

Your great country, my dear L., should cast away all religious and national prejudice hereafter. As long as she holds the great body of the population unredressed in Ireland, so long must expence, danger, and uncertainty for the future, continue. Her fundamental laws were made against arbitrary power, not against any religious sect of Christians in the empire. I wish not Catholic ascendancy in Ireland, more than I do Protestant. But, until Catholics are fully relieved, and enjoy equal privileges, local despotism, that which Henry the Second came for ever to extinguish, must exist. This must always occasion the English government to be less beloved. Every petty tyrant is ready to call out, "disaffection," if an oppressed victim but groans. England has not yet discovered her

true interest. Let party-principles cease to preside, and the cabinet itself be the spot whence complete justice to Ireland shall emanate, and the future need not be feared. Neglect of the miserable population of their states, cast the kings of Europe at the feet of revolutionary France! The same thing in Italy, nearly made Hannibal master of Rome. If France and North America ever unite to attack this Sicily of England, the transatlantic Carthage may succeed better than the Mediterranean one.

In the late war, martello-towers were built round Ireland, on a coast of seven or eight hundred miles extent, and cost the empire above a million of money. The mere statement of the fact declares the impracticability and extreme folly of the plan. No large island can be thus defended. Martello-towers are better fitted for little islands in a lake. What shall be the future defence?

Edward the Third, the most glorious and successful of English monarchs, tried an union in vain! He attempted to govern by party, and partial laws, and system. Shall we do better, if his errors be not henceforth avoided? As my respect for the memory of Mr. Pitt increases, I the more wish the union he sketched may succeed! But he made a treaty with a small portion of the people, and left out the great body. Having given them hopes of relief, he ought not to have returned to

office if he could not realize them; but I think I perceive, that a god-like motive for the safety of the whole empire impelled him. It vindicates him!

My veneration for the name of Mr. Fox, to whom, and not to his party, (and to whom I never owed any obligation,) I was attached, is great; but I think he should not have forborne to make some effort to redress the population of Ireland. The fond idea of peace, however, absorbed his mind! Without resolving immediately to relieve Ireland, it were better for his own fame he had never become minister in 1806.—These great men have left the empire very far from consolidated!

It is no idle dream of power I wish to set before the Irish nation. I consider their happiness and prosperity to be inseparably linked with England's friendship! It is that rational independence at home, under the British government, which Flanders long enjoyed under Austria, or Norway under Denmark, to which I wish them to point their thoughts! The Irish themselves will be happier in such a state than any other! The wild and detestable phantom of mistaken liberty, ought not to delude them. It is but licentiousness, and love of power and revenge compounded! They are a nation more suited to act and execute, than to govern and plan. Their astonishing and mercurial talents

may have abundant room, under a good system of domestic freedom, bestowed by England. But such arrangement will not suffice for future times altogether. The hive overflows! It is, therefore, the duty of the British government to provide a place for young swarms to fly off to, and rest in!

British statesmen may employ the superfluity in fertilizing vacant lands elsewhere; and if they mix the colony with the ingenious and educated Scotch, it will be better. If the Floridas could have been gained from Spain for this purpose, it might have been well.

I acknowledge, my dear L., that having walked and mingled among these most interesting, talented, and long-oppressed people, I feel a heavy melancholy super-add itself to that I have so much been subject to, in the reflection, that their chains may be allowed to rust longer upon them!

Perhaps civil war and foreign arms may again desolate these plains, these vallies, and villages, where we have wandered or reposed! If, from remote times, this once happy island has been tortured by the alternate miseries of foreign invasion, and local tyranny, shall not fainting nature be at length relieved? Shall not the prince and ministers, who completed the overthrow of the late tyrant of the Continent, turn their eyes to this noble people, who contributed their best

blood, and best general, to the glorious cause? Shall they have anxiety to adjust the Continent, and leave their own empire pregnant with future danger? The constitution is not a bigot. Its paternal arms should equally cover and protect all!

Our pedestrian toils now end. When this fair island shall still bloom, and the great empire to which it belongs be increasing in glory and strength, such humble toils may be long forgotten; but, if the departed spirit can look back to earthly scenes, my satisfaction will be unclouded in beholding Ireland happy, through a long withheld restoration to her rights and liberties; her people no more bent to the soil by unspeakable misery, and pressed by want and malady, as now; and real concord established in the British isles. I shall feel that I laboured for this great end, and if others accomplish it, shall be gratified in having contributed this effort for the people of Ireland, which was due to their merits, their misfortunes, and their talents!

I bid you, my dear L., heartily farewell, with every wish for your happiness and health, and am, most truly,

J. B. TROTTER.

FINIS.

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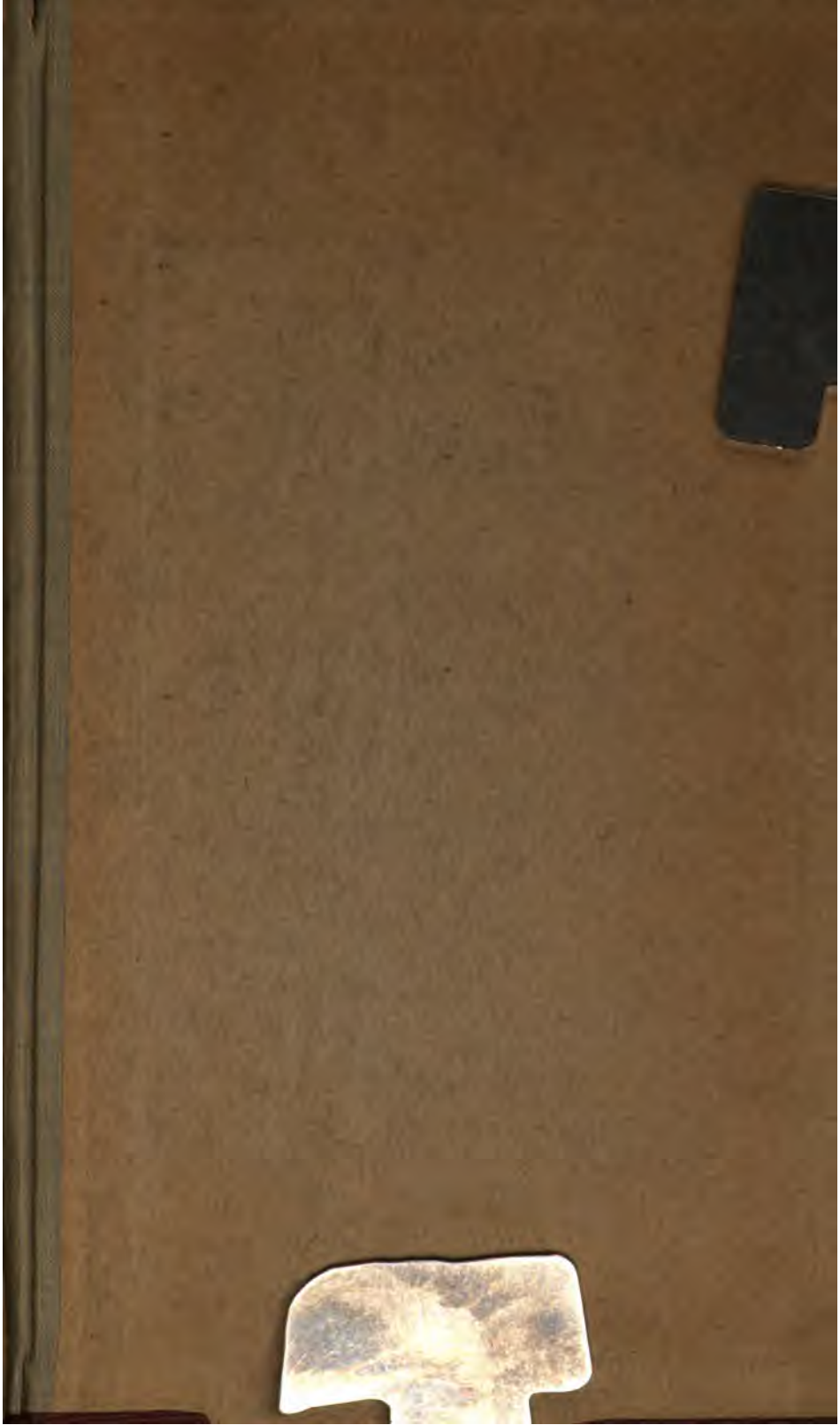
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